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The Compensatory Benefits of Discipleship in the Gospel of John

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DECLARATION

The thesis is entirely my own work and it has not been submitted for any other degree or publication.

ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a focused study on the benefits of discipleship in the Gospel of John (GJohn). While previous research has considered the meaning of the terms disciple and discipleship, characterization of the Johannine disciples, and various characteristics of discipleship, in the current study I investigate certain themes that can be understood as compensatory benefits of discipleship in GJohn. I argue that these benefits can be grouped under three primary benefits that John deploys to promote discipleship.

These three primary benefits are: membership in the divine family, the Father and the Son abiding in the believer through the Spirit, and royal friendship with Jesus. I have identified these three primary benefits based on either the benefit's strategic placement in the text, or prominence in the Gospel, or peculiar meaning in GJohn. In addition to the three primary benefits, I argue that John features corollary benefits that appear in the surrounding narrative of the three key benefits. The corollary benefits of membership in the divine family are life, love, knowledge of God and of the truth, freedom from sin, walking in the light, salvation, avoidance of judgment/destruction, resurrection, protection, performance of great works, affirmation of genuine discipleship, honor, glory, and unity/oneness of the Father and the Son with the other disciples. The corollary benefits to abiding—which are contingent upon the disciples' abiding in Jesus—are the presence of the Paraclete, love, peace, joy, avoidance of judgment, answered requests, the ability to perform great works, fruit, and affirmation of genuine discipleship. The corollary benefits to royal friendship with Jesus are love, knowledge of the Father, fruit, joy, and answered requests. The corollary benefits that are constituent of more than one primary benefit—love, affirmation of genuine discipleship, avoidance of judgment, joy, knowledge, answered requests, fruit, and performance of great works—are examined in the context of the primary benefit that develops the accompanying benefit most thoroughly.

My study is rooted in a close reading of the text, with an exegetical and a narrational analysis of John's presentation of discipleship. In chapter 1, I frame my argument in light of the existing literature on discipleship. In chapters 2 through 4, I investigate the three primary benefits and the affiliated corollary benefits. In chapter 2, I argue that followers of Jesus are integrated into the family of God by divine initiation. The disciple is then granted eternal life that enables him to relate to God, Jesus, and other members within the divine family, which results in the aforementioned additional benefits. In chapter 3, I argue that the theme of abiding with God and Jesus has a present and a future dimension in GJohn. In chapter 4, I argue that John depicts Jesus as a royal figure who invites his disciples into a friendship in which they experience the privilege of being members of his royal circle. In chapter 5, I suggest that John presents the benefits of commitment to Jesus against the general backdrop of the hostility of "the Jews" and the world toward Jesus and his followers. This opposition might have been a factor in the then-current experience of Johannine believers, or it might be reflective of the experience of a prior time which continued to form part of the outlook of the Johannine believers. In light of the potential cost of following Jesus, we can understand certain Johannine themes as compensatory benefits that are deployed in GJohn to promote continuous discipleship. In chapter 6, I synthesize my findings.

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ABBREVIATIONS

In addition to the following, all abbreviations in this thesis are taken from: *The SBL Handbook of Style*. 2nd edition. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014.

AMS	Artscroll Mishnah Series
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BTNT	Biblical Theology of the New Testament
EGGNT	Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament
EUS	European University Studies
HA	Historische Abteilung
HBS	Herders biblische Studien
JCHS	Jewish and Christian Heritage Series
<i>Jeev</i>	Jeevadhara
<i>JTSA</i>	Journal of Theology for Southern Africa
KNT	Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
MTS	Münchener theologische Studien
NTM	New Testament Monographs
PBTM	Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs
<i>RevExp</i>	Review and Expositor
RNBC	Readings: A New Biblical Commentary
SBEC	Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity
<i>SVTQ</i>	St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly
<i>TI</i>	Testamentum Imperium
TSS	Themes in the Social Sciences
WBT	Word Biblical Themes
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Aim of the Thesis

This thesis offers a focused study on the benefits of continuous devotion to Jesus in the Gospel of John (GJohn). I argue that certain themes in GJohn can be viewed as compensatory benefits that are conferred on an individual who exhibits commitment to Jesus. I propose that these Johannine themes can be grouped under three overarching benefits that John deploys to promote allegiance to Jesus. The three primary benefits are: membership in the divine family; abiding with the Father, Son, and Spirit; and royal friendship with Jesus.

John intersperses in the surrounding narrative of the three main benefits additional corollary benefits. The corollary benefits of membership in the divine family are life, love, knowledge of God and of the truth, freedom from sin, walking in the light, salvation, avoidance of judgment/destruction, resurrection, protection, performance of great works, affirmation of genuine discipleship, honor, glory, and unity/oneness of the Father and the Son with the other disciples. The corollary benefits to abiding—which are contingent upon the disciples’ abiding in Jesus—are the presence of the Paraclete, love, peace, joy, avoidance of judgment, answered requests, the ability to perform great works, fruit, and affirmation of genuine discipleship. The corollary benefits to royal friendship with Jesus are love, knowledge of the Father, fruit, joy, and answered requests. As evident in the listing above, certain corollary benefits appear within the context of more than a single key benefit, and I treat these alongside the benefit with which they are discussed most thoroughly by John.

I am contending that we can understand the above themes as compensatory benefits of continuous discipleship in light of the cost that is associated with belief in Jesus (see chapter 5). While the centrality of discipleship in GJohn has been noted by scholars, and while there have been many inquiries into the definition, characterization, and expressions of Johannine discipleship,¹ there has not been a

¹ See §1.8 for literature review.

focused study of the benefits conferred on the disciples of Jesus. This thesis seeks to rectify this lacuna in Johannine scholarship.

1.2 Methodology

I approach this study with a close reading of the text, giving careful attention to the literary and narrational features in the Gospel.² To situate the Gospel narrative in a historical context and to expand on the Gospel's concepts that are confined to a specific socio-cultural setting, I rely on socio-historical insights from the Greco-Roman and Jewish writings where appropriate.

1.3 The Prominence of Discipleship in GJohn

Before delving into the definition of Johannine discipleship and the relationship between discipleship and its compensatory benefits, I discuss John's emphasis on the theme of discipleship. To facilitate the discussion concerning John's invitation for his readers to believe in Jesus, I employ the term "discipleship" as a general designation for an individual's devotion to Jesus. This devotion encompasses various expressions of commitment to Jesus, such as, but not limited to, continuous belief in Jesus, receiving Jesus, following Jesus, confessing Jesus, witnessing to Jesus, loving Jesus, and remaining in Jesus and in his teaching.³ The prominence of discipleship as a theme is observable (1) in the lexical preference of μαθητής as a designation for Jesus' followers and (2) in the dual use of πιστεύω alongside the reference to τῶν μαθητῶν in the purpose statement (20:30–31) as well as with three illustrations of discipleship in the immediate context of 20:30–31.⁴

² My method closely resembles historical narrative criticism which has been applied by the following scholars: Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2009), 20–21; M. C. de Boer, "Narrative Criticism, Historical Criticism, and the Gospel of John," *JSNT* 47 (1992): 35–58; Stephen Motyer, "Method in Fourth Gospel Studies: A Way Out of an Impasse?," *JSNT* 66 (1997): 27–44; Gail R. O'Day, "Toward a Narrative-Critical Study of John," *Int* 49 no. 4 (1995): 341–46. Resseguie summarizes the benefits of narrative criticism as follows: it approaches the text as a whole, it examines the complexities and nuances of a text through close readings, and it emphasizes the effects of the story on the reader. James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 38–40.

³ Bennema similarly views discipleship as the expression of belief in Jesus. See footnote 31 below.

⁴ I do not elevate the importance of discipleship above Christology. With regard to discipleship, the readers are exhorted to respond to the Christology presented in GJohn by becoming disciples of Jesus.

First, John's emphasis on discipleship is demonstrated by his preference to use the term "disciple" (μαθητής) over the terms the "apostles" (ἀπόστολοι) or the "twelve" (δώδεκα) as a designation for the followers of Jesus.⁵ The terms "apostles" and the "twelve" convey exclusivity, whereas the prominence of μαθητής in GJohn indicates inclusivity.⁶ The noun μαθητής⁷ appears 78 times in GJohn, which is more frequent than in any other Gospel.⁸ The Johannine referents for μαθητής are the followers of Jesus (74 times), the disciples of John the Baptist (1:35, 37, 3:25), and "the Jews" who claimed to be the disciples of Moses (9:28). The frequent use of μαθητής to describe the followers of Jesus suggests that this term is John's featured term for discipleship. A review of the use of μαθητής indicates that the term does not apply exclusively to Jesus' inner circle of disciples (20:19), but that it also refers to temporary believers in Jesus (6:66).⁹ To distinguish between true followers of Jesus (20:19) and temporary sympathizers who defect due to Jesus' difficult teaching (6:60–66) or negative social ramifications (9:22; 12:42), John portrays Jesus as challenging all of his followers—even those who are most faithful—to demonstrate

Hera recently linked Christology with discipleship by arguing that the former is the basis for the latter. Hera's observation that John depicts Jesus in a way "that leads the audience to a better understanding of their own identity as the disciples and followers of Jesus" is the reasonable conclusion one draws from John's purpose statement; that is, John's Christology should result in discipleship on the part of the reader. Marianus Pale Hera, *Christology and Discipleship in John 17*, WUNT 2.342 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), citing 36, see also 168.

⁵ The term οἱ ἀπόστολοι appears only in John 13:16 in contrast with 9 times in the Synoptic Gospels (SG); οἱ δώδεκα appears 4 times in John 6:67, 70, 71; 20:24 in contrast with 27 times in the SG.

⁶ Culpepper suggests that "'disciples' more easily includes believing readers." R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 115. The inclusive nature of Johannine discipleship was observed by Hera in connecting the use of πάντα (all) in 1:3, 7, with 12:32. In 1:3, John writes, "all things came into being through him," and in 1:7 we read, "so that all may believe through him." In 12:32 John depicts Jesus as promising "to draw all (πάντας) men to himself" by means of the cross. The placement of πάντα with the theme of belief functions as an inclusio in the narrative of the public ministry of Jesus (John 1–12) and thereby points to the general call to believe in Jesus. Hera, *Christology*, 49.

⁷ John also uses the verb μαθηθάνω (I learn) twice (6:45; 7:15) but only in 6:45 it contains the meaning of discipleship where John quotes Isa 54:13 to describe the followers of Jesus as those who are "taught by God." In 7:15, μαθηθάνω refers to Jesus' knowledge apart from formal training as perceived by "the Jews."

⁸ Μαθητής appears in Matt 72 times; Mark 46 times; Luke 37 times; and in Acts 28 times.

⁹ Köstenberger argues that the meaning of μαθητής widens in the course of GJohn. Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples according to the Fourth Gospel: With Implications for the Fourth Gospel's Purpose and the Mission of the Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 142–53, 167, 178.

allegiance beyond that of outward affiliation (8:31; 15:8) and to commit to continuous discipleship.

Second, the prominence of discipleship in GJohn is evident in the purpose statement through the dual invitation to believe in Jesus alongside the term $\tau\acute{\omega}\nu \mu\alpha\theta\eta\tau\acute{\omega}\nu$. In 20:30–31, we read:

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his *disciples* which have not been written in this book, but these have been written so that you may *believe* that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by *believing* you may have life in his name.

Scholarly dialogue divides primarily into one of two interpretations of this statement: evangelistic¹⁰ or didactic/pastoral.¹¹ Scholars who advocate for the evangelistic view prefer the aorist subjunctive ($\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\eta\tau\epsilon$)¹² in 20:31, whereas those who defend the pastoral aim of the Gospel prefer the present subjunctive ($\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\eta\tau\epsilon$).¹³ Since both

¹⁰ John Bowman, “The Fourth Gospel and the Samaritans,” *BJRL* 40 (1958): 298–308; D. A. Carson, “The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel: John 20:31 Reconsidered,” *JBL* 6 (1987): 639–51; Edwin E. Freed, “Samaritan Influence in the Gospel of John,” *CBQ* 30 (1968): 580–87; J. A. T. Robinson, “The Destination and Purpose of St. John’s Gospel,” *NTS* 6 (1959/60): 117–31; W. C. Van Unnik, “The Purpose of St. John’s Gospel,” *SE* (1959): 382–411.

¹¹ Johannes S. J. Beutler, “Faith and Confession: The Purpose of John,” in *Texts about Faith and Confession*, ed. Rudolf Hoppe und Ulrich Berges (Bonn: V & R Unipress; Bonn University Press, 2012), 102; Raymond E. Brown and Francis J. Moloney, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 152, 182–83; Kenneth L. Carroll, “The Fourth Gospel and the Exclusion of Christians from the Synagogues,” *BJRL* 40 no. 1 (1957): 19–32; Nicolas Farelly, *The Disciples in the Fourth Gospel: A Narrative Analysis of Their Faith and Understanding*, WUNT 2.290 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 85–86, 176–79, 227–28; David Kaczmarek, *An Introduction to Language in the Johannine Community: Love, Friendship, and Discipleship in the Gospel according to John* (Minneapolis, MN: Xlibris, 2008), 36–37; J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968; Reprint, Westminster Knox Press, 2003); Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, NovTSup, NovTSup (Leiden: Brill, 1967); Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John: Text and Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 258; Kevin Quast, *Reading the Gospel of John: An Introduction* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 7; Fernando F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word: The Johannine Call to Abide* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991), 301; D. F. Tolmie, *Jesus’ Farewell to the Disciples: John 13:1–17:26 in Narratological Perspective*, BIS 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 38–39. Some suggest it is a document against the heretics, James D. G. Dunn, “John VI—A Eucharistic Discourse?,” *NTS* 17 (1971): 19–32; Howard M. Jackson, “Ancient Self-Referential Conventions and their Implications of the Authorship and Integrity of the Gospel of John,” *JTS* 50 (1999): 18–20; Udo Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John: An Investigation of the Place of the Fourth Gospel in the Johannine School* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992).

¹² Attested by \aleph^2 A C D L W Ψ and many other mss. See NA textual apparatus.

¹³ Attested by \aleph^{66vid} \aleph^* B Θ 0250. 892^s. l 2211. Farelly, with dependence on Lincoln’s lawsuit and witness motif, argues for a pastoral purpose by noting that John establishes the frame in 1:14, 16, and 21:24 with the “we” language, which suggests that the implied author and implied readers share a

the present and the aorist subjunctive are well attested in the manuscripts,¹⁴ some scholars have proposed a dual meaning in the Johannine purpose statement.¹⁵ For example, although Bennema prefers the evangelistic sense of πιστεύω within the Gospel,¹⁶ he concludes that “both aspects (evangelistic and pastoral) are reflected throughout the entire Gospel and summed up in 20:31.”¹⁷ Despite these different views, it is important to observe that both the evangelistic and the pastoral understanding of 20:30–31 exhibit John’s focus on commitment to Jesus.¹⁸ This is seen in the dual use of πιστεύω in 20:31, “that you may believe...and that by

common faith. That is, as the writer was a witness to Jesus, he now encourages his believing readers to be faithful witnesses for Jesus. Farely, *Disciples*, 176–79. For additional manuscript evidence of 20:30–31, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols., AB 29–29A (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 1056.

¹⁴ Metzger notes that in light of the difficulty of the manuscript evidence in support of both readings, the Committee chose to represent both options with the σ in brackets. See Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/German Bible Society, 1994), 219–20.

¹⁵ Scholars who subscribe to/permit the dual purpose interpretation are: Saeed Hamid-Khani, *Revelation and Concealment of Christ: A Theological Inquiry into the Elusive Language of the Fourth Gospel*, WUNT 2.120 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 208–19; Won-Ha Hwang, Van der Watt, J. G., “The Identity of the Recipients of the Fourth Gospel in the Light of the Purpose of the Gospel,” *TS* 63 no. 2 (2007): 683–98; Köstenberger, *Missions*, 200–10; Stephen Motyer, *Your Father the Devil?: A New Approach to John and “the Jews,”* PBTM (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997), 58–61; Walter Rebell, *Gemeinde als Gegenwart: zur soziologischen und didaktischen Funktion des Johannesevangeliums*, Gemeinde, BBET 20 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1987), 126–29; Derek Tovey, *Narrative Art and Act in the Fourth Gospel*, JSNTSup 151 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 84–92, 97–108; Marianne Meyer Thompson, *John: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 430.

¹⁶ Cornelis Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel*, WUNT 2.148 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 2002), 108.

¹⁷ Bennema interacts with Tovey to explain the dual purpose interpretation. Tovey refers to the two foci (i.e., evangelistic and pastoral) “as waves, for the themes surge and recede in both sections [John 1–12 and 13–21], more dominant at certain points than at others, bringing different aspects to the fore at different times.” Bennema extends the imagery of the two foci as two waves beyond Tovey’s proposal of John 1–12 and 13–21 and Bennema applies it to the purpose statement and thus concludes that John has an evangelistic and pastoral aim in 20:31. I find Bennema’s analysis persuasive for 20:31. See *ibid.*, 107–10, citing above 108; Tovey, *Narrative*, 108.

¹⁸ Although the aorist subjunctive (πιστεύητε) is generally viewed by scholars as affirming the evangelistic purpose in 20:30–31, the aorist is perfective in aspect and is used by the author to convey the action as a whole. Thus the aorist subjunctive does not speak to the kind of action (e.g., punctiliar or progressive) but as to how the action is viewed, that is, from the external viewpoint as simple action. Therefore, the present (πιστεύετε) and the aorist (πιστεύητε) can both support the notion that John encourages his readers to continuous discipleship. Constantine R. Campbell, *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 91–92; Constantine R. Campbell, *Advances in the Study of Greek: New Insights for Reading the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 106–8, 121. Bennema also cautions against putting too much weight on syntax in determining the evangelistic or pastoral aim of the Gospel since John seems to use the present and the aorist to refer to initial and continuous belief. Bennema, *Power*, 108.

believing you may have life,” which underscores John’s emphasis on continuous devotion to Jesus that yields the benefit of life.

Moreover, this prominence of discipleship is further manifested within the near context of the purpose statement by means of three illustrations of discipleship—namely, Beloved disciple’s (BD), Peter’s, and Thomas’ commitment to Jesus. The BD demonstrates his commitment to Jesus in that he runs to the tomb (20:1–10) at the news of the empty tomb and in that he *believed* once he saw the empty tomb (20:8–9).¹⁹ Peter’s presence at the tomb also suggests that he is a loyal disciple of Jesus.²⁰ For despite his triple denial of Jesus (18:15–18, 25–27)—in contrast to his earlier confession (6:68–69) and his claim to be committed to Jesus to the point of death (13:37)—Peter still arrives at the tomb with the BD. Peter’s loyalty to Jesus is also expressed in the pericope immediately after the purpose statement in which John depicts Peter jumping into the sea to approach Jesus before the other disciples in the boat (21:7–8).²¹ This assessment about the BD and Peter is then affirmed in the conclusion of the Gospel inasmuch as Peter and the Beloved disciple are said to continue to follow Jesus (21:19–23). Moreover, the BD’s allegiance to Jesus is further expressed in the conclusion of the Gospel in his designation as a witness to Jesus (21:24). Finally, Thomas’ climactic profession, “My Lord and my God” (20:28), is an expression of discipleship because this confession follows Thomas’ earlier lapse in allegiance when he declared “I will never believe” (20:25), but now Jesus affirms his belief (20:29) and Thomas is designated as Jesus’ disciple (21:1–2). I suggest that John’s integration of the BD’s, Peter’s, and Thomas’ belief in Jesus in the near context of the purpose statement and of their designation as “disciples” in John 21 buttresses John’s emphasis on discipleship.

¹⁹ Pace Moloney who argues that the BD’s arrival at the tomb before Peter indicates the BD’s greater degree of love and faith for Jesus. However, John presents both disciples misunderstanding the resurrection, returning home, and both disciples are portrayed negatively during the race—the BD does not enter the tomb and Peter runs slower. Thus, Moloney’s correlation of the degree of faith with speed in the race is unwarranted. Francis J. Moloney, “John 20: A Journey Completed,” *ACR* 59 (1982): 425.

²⁰ In 21:1–2 Peter is listed first as one of Jesus’ disciples.

²¹ In §1.7 I note that I approach GJohn in its final form, including the prologue and epilogue.

In sum, the prominence of discipleship in GJohn is observable in John's preference of μαθητής and in the dual use of πιστεύω in the purpose statement along with the three examples of belief—Peter, the BD, and Thomas—that demonstrate discipleship.

1.4 The Definition of Discipleship

In classical Greek,²² μαθητής referred to three types of individuals. Μαθητής may denote an individual who devotes his mind to something, a pupil in a “teacher-pupil” relationship, or a disciple in a “master-disciple” relationship.²³ These relationships were characterized by loyalty and inward commitment on the part of the disciple to the master/teacher.²⁴ Feuillet observes this type of personal devotion of Jesus' disciples to Jesus when he writes, “Dans les évangiles, le mot ‘disciple’ désigne des hommes qui sont entrés en contact personnel avec Jésus, se sont attachés à lui et mis à sa suite.”²⁵ Rengstorf highlights the same theme when he states that John “always implies the existence of a personal attachment which shapes the whole life of the one described as μαθητής.”²⁶ Rengstorf observes that this attachment is similar to an apprentice who learns from a tradesman.²⁷ He explains:

²² Terminology related to the concept of discipleship is nearly non-existent in the Hebrew Bible; and the same is true of the LXX. The Hebrew noun תלמיד (disciple) appears only in 1 Chr 25:8 (LXX: μανθανόντων) in reference to skillful musicians in David's kingdom; and תלם appears in Isa 8:16 in reference to Isaiah's disciples (LXX employs the verb μαθεῖν; see 50:4, LXX: παιδείας) and in 54:13 in reference to sons/daughters being taught by God (LXX: διδακτοὺς θεοῦ). The noun μαθητής never appears in the LXX while the verb μαθάνειν appears 56 times, but never to describe a relationship between a teacher and a pupil as is characteristic of the Gospels. Similarly, the sons of prophets (2 Kgs 2:3, 5, 7, 15; 4:38; 6:1) conveyed messages that were sourced in God's prophetic revelation. Feuillet surmises that the absence of the noun for discipleship in the OT is due to the OT presentation of Yahweh as the source of teaching and salvation; thus, prophets did not have pupils. However, Hahn is probably right when he understands the followers of the prophets as prefiguring the disciples of Jesus as their relationship seems to mimic that of Jesus and his disciples. André Feuillet, *Études johanniques*, Museum Lessianum Section biblique 4 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1962), 100–1; Ferdinand Hahn, August Strobel, and Eduard Schweizer, *Die Anfänge der Kirche im Neuen Testament*, trans., Iain and Ute Nicol (Göttingen; Minneapolis: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht; Augsburg Pub. House, 1967), 15–17.

²³ Rengstorf, “μαθητής,” *TDNT*, 4:416–26.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4:424.

²⁵ Feuillet, *Études*, 107.

²⁶ Rengstorf, “μαθητής,” 4:441.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 4:416.

The emphasis is not so much on the incompleteness or even deficiency of education as on the fact that the one thus designated is engaged in learning, that his education consists in the appropriation or adoption of specific knowledge or conduct, and that it proceeds deliberately and according to a set plan. There is thus no μαθητής without a διδάσκαλος. The process involves a corresponding personal relation.²⁸

In this regard, the teacher-pupil relationship between Jesus and his followers is evident in John's use of the terms Παββί (teacher, 1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8; 20:16), διδάσκαλος (teacher, 3:2; 8:4; 11:28; 13:13–14), and κύριος (Lord, 6:68; 11:12, 39; 13:13–14, 25; 14:5, 8, 22; 20:13) to refer to Jesus.

In portraying the master-disciple relationship between Jesus and his disciples, John stresses that such a relationship must consist of commitment to Jesus that is expressed through obedience to Jesus. Johannine expressions of discipleship are listed in the chart below; such expressions of devotion will aid in formulating a working definition of discipleship.²⁹ However, since my thesis focuses on the benefits of discipleship rather than on its expressions, it will suffice here to list the expressions of discipleship and to note them in the thesis when relevant to the discussion on the compensatory benefits of discipleship.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid. In John, διδάσκαλος appears in only five passages, four of which refer to Jesus (3:2; 11:28; 13:13, 14) and one refers to Nicodemus (3:10). None of these references to διδάσκαλος appear in the same verse or in proximate verses containing μαθητής. The corresponding Παββί is similarly scarce, appearing in only eight passages, with the majority of the uses in reference to Jesus on the part of his disciples (1:38, 49; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8), once in relation to Jesus by Nicodemus (3:2) and once it is employed by the disciples of John the Baptist to their teacher (3:26).

²⁹ I do not think Pazdan goes far enough in explaining Johannine discipleship when she concludes that (1) the basis of discipleship is belief, (2) the heart of discipleship is knowing, loving, and abiding with Jesus, and (3) the task of discipleship is seeking Jesus and keeping his commands. For, as the above chart indicates, John also features receiving Jesus, confessing Jesus, and hating one's life as aspects of discipleship. Mary M. Pazdan, "Discipleship as the Appropriation of Eschatological Salvation in the Fourth Gospel." (Ph.D., University of St. Michael's College, 1982), 309.

Expressions of Discipleship	Text
To believe in Jesus—as messiah, as one who is sent by God, as Son of God, as the light, as one with the Father	3:15–21, 36; 4:25–26, 42; 5:34–39; 6:29, 40, 57; 8:23–29; 10:26, 31–39; 11:25–27; 12:36, 44, 46; 14:1, 10–12, 31; 16:27, 30; 17:8, 20, 25–26; 20:30–31
To receive Jesus and his word	1:11–13; 5:43; 12:48; 13:20; 17:8
To abide in Jesus	6:56; 15:1–11
To remain in Jesus’ teaching	8:31; 15:7–11
To love Jesus and abide in his love	14:15, 21–24, 28; 15:9–10; 21:15–17
To love other disciples	13:13–17, 34–35; 15:12, 17
To hear Jesus’ voice	10:3, 16, 27
To obey Jesus’ commands, his sayings, and God’s word	10:16; 12:47–50; 14:15, 21, 23–24; 15:10, 14; 17:6
To bear fruit	4:35–38; 12:24–26; 15:1–8, 16
To know Jesus and the Father	14:7
To follow Jesus	1:37–43; 8:12; 10:4–5, 27; 12:26; 13:36–37; 18:15; 21:19–22
To serve Jesus	12:26
To hate one’s life	12:25
To confess Jesus	12:42
To wash other disciples’ feet	13:13–17
To bear witness to Jesus	15:27; 21:24

The above chart indicates the cognitive and kinetic expressions of following Jesus. That is, Johannine discipleship is depicted as belief (cognitive) that is accompanied by behavioral change (kinetic). Based on the chart and the above discussion concerning the relational components of discipleship, Johannine discipleship can be defined as devotion to Jesus that is characterized by continuous belief derived from rational and relational knowledge of the Father and the Son as sustained by the Spirit, resulting in confession of Jesus as Messiah and a life of obedience to his teaching.³¹ Thus, an authentic disciple is intertwined in a relationship with the Father and with

³⁰ I do not claim to be exhaustive in the listing of the expressions of discipleship as that is outside the scope of my thesis.

³¹ Bennema’s definition of discipleship helped formulate my definition. Bennema writes: “John advocates a relational cognitive belief, i.e., a personal relationship with and allegiance to Jesus (and the Father) based on an adequate understanding of the Father and Son in terms of their identity, mission and relationship. This ‘belief is demonstrated in (continuous) discipleship. Thus, salvation is essentially relational, in that the believer participates in the divine life in relationship with the Father and Son through the Spirit, but this saving relationship has a cognitive foundation, which is provided

the Son through the enablement of the Spirit; and this relationship leads to discernible noetic and kinetic expressions of allegiance to the Father and the Son on the part of the disciple.

1.5 The Relationship of Discipleship to the Benefits

In this section, I explain my rationale for designating certain Johannine themes as benefits of discipleship/commitment to Jesus.

First, the inclusion of the promise of life in the purpose statement (20:31) forges a link between the dual mention of belief and the reward for believing. The purpose statement of GJohn is that life is obtained by believing in Jesus as the Messiah. Observing this link between belief and life, Bennema captures the essence of this purpose statement well when he writes, “The single purpose of the Fourth Gospel is that people may (continuously) have (eternal) life in Jesus’ name through a continuous life of believing displayed in discipleship.”³² This association of belief in Jesus with the benefit of eternal life within the purpose statement of GJohn serves to promote the idea of discipleship to the readers of GJohn. In this link between discipleship and life, the reader is prompted to view the Gospel through the lens of the promise that there are benefits for believing.

Second, in addition to the purpose statement, the prologue associates the summons to discipleship with compensatory benefits. Scholars have shown that the prologue sets the focus for the rest of the Gospel.³³ In 1:7, we note that John the

by the Spirit. Moreover, this relationship is continuously expressed in and as discipleship (as a belief-response).” Bennema, *Power*, 251.

³² Ibid., 109.

³³ The following scholars affirm that the prologue sets the focus for the rest of the Gospel and the themes that appear in the prologue are developed further in the rest of the Gospel. Ibid., 110 fn. 29; Raymond E. Brown, “The Prologue of the Gospel of John: John 1:1–18,” *RevExp* 62 no. 4 (1965): 429; Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1971), 13; Elizabeth Harris, *Prologue and Gospel: The Theology of the Fourth Evangelist*, JSNTSup 107 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 189; Stanley E. Porter, *John and his Gospel, and Jesus: In Pursuit of the Johannine Voice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 119; Herman N. Ridderbos, “The Structure and Scope of the Prologue to the Gospel of John,” in *The Composition of John’s Gospel: Selected Studies from ‘Novum Testamentum,’* ed. David E. Orton (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 57; J. A. T. Robinson, “The Relation of the Prologue to the Gospel of John,” *NTS* 9 no. 2 (January 1963): 121, 122, 128; Matthew Vellanickal, *The Divine Sonship of Christians in the Johannine Writings*, *Anelecta Biblica* 72 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1977), 105; Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 1.

Baptist's testimony to the light contains an implicit call for all to believe in the light. This summons to believe is reinforced in 1:11–13 where John connects an individual's reception of the Logos and belief in the Logos with the benefit of becoming a child of God. Scholars have persuasively argued that the prologue is a chiasm with the focal point contained in v. 12b: "He gave them authority to become children of God."³⁴ This chiastic structure in 1:12–13 reveals that the incorporation of the believers into the divine family is the central purpose of the coming of the light and the incarnation of the Logos (1:5, 7, 11–14). By including the promise of becoming a child of God in juxtaposition to believing in and receiving Jesus (1:11–12), John indicates that belief in Jesus yields this reward.

John also associates Jesus' purpose for coming with a benefit to the believers in two additional passages—10:10 and 12:46. In 10:10, John portrays Jesus as declaring: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." In 12:46, we read: "I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." In both passages John associates Jesus' coming with benefits to those who believe—life and escape from darkness—which, I submit, serve to promote belief in Jesus (see 10:25–26, 37–38; 12:46). Based on these passages, I propose that John's call to believe in Jesus (1:7, 11) should be read alongside these benefits that are promised to believers in Jesus.

With regard to the discussion on the prologue, I propose that the three primary benefits that I discuss in this thesis are qualitatively relational. As noted above, the prologue is a window into the Gospel, and the opening words of the prologue introduce the reader to the Logos and his *relationship* to God (1:1–3), thus setting a relational prism for reading the rest of the Gospel. In 1:10–13, the writer deploys relational terminology to distinguish between the antithetical responses to

³⁴ M. E. Boismard, *Le prologue de saint Jean* (Paris: 1953), 106–8; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 113; R. Alan Culpepper, "The Pivot of John's Prologue," *NTS* 27 no. 1 (1980): 14; André Feuillet, *Le prologue du quatrième évangile* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1968), 137–77; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 38; Michael C. McKeever, "Born of God: The 'Virgin Birth' of Believers in the Fourth Gospel," in *But These are Written: Essays on Johannine Literature in Honor of Professor Benny C. Aker*, ed. Craig S. Keener, Jeremy S. Crenshaw, and Jordan D. May (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 121–38; Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 132–36.

the light: the response of some who received him and that of those who did not. The designation τὰ ἴδια (his own, 1:11; see also 10:3, 4, 12; 13:1), in reference to the audience of the light, also evokes a relational framework for the Gospel narrative. The individuals who believe in the light are placed into a familial relationship with God (1:11–13) through the light who is identified as the Logos (1:1–5).

The purpose statement states that a follower of Jesus experiences a familial relationship not only with the Logos, but also with the Father. Indeed a believer is integrated into a dyadic relationship that cannot be dissected into two separate relationships. In the rest of the Gospel, we learn the parallel experience of the believer in her relationship to the Father and to the Son. For example, to receive Jesus is to receive the Father (13:20); to know the Father is to know Jesus (14:7; 16:3), though they are known distinctly (17:2–3);³⁵ to be loved by Jesus is to be loved by the Father (14:23; 15:9; 16:27; 17:23); to see Jesus is to see the Father (12:45; 14:9); to hate Jesus is to hate the Father (15:23, 24); and to be with Jesus is to be with the Father (14:2–3). According to 1:12–13, a believer is in a relationship both with God/Father and with Jesus. John presents the believer’s relationships with the Father and the Son in a manner that disallows the reader either to sever these two relationships from one another or to conflate them into a single relationship. Rather, the benefits extended to a faithful disciple are obtained through the dual relationship with the Father and the Son. The placement of the relationship motif in the prologue affirms the importance of this motif to the rest of the Gospel.³⁶

³⁵ Bultmann identifies a similar duality of a single relationship when he writes, “double knowledge (of God and Christ) is really one single knowledge—for God is only known through the Revealer, and the latter is known only when God is recognized in him.” Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1951), 2:78. Rainbow also observes duality in the believer’s relationship with the Father and the Son. He writes, “John does not propound two separate objects of religious knowledge. Disciples do not know the Son in addition to the Father, much less instead of the Father. In knowing the Son, it is the essence of the Father that they encounter...John’s christocentric epistemology does not compromise his ontological monotheism, but makes knowledge of the one God accessible by locating the revelation in that agent who is eminently suited to disclose the heart of the personal God.” Paul A. Rainbow, *Johannine Theology: The Gospel, the Epistles and the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 305.

³⁶ Aune has observed the importance of opening comments in an ancient letter to the rest of the letter. He writes, “Pauline thanksgivings usually encapsulate the main themes of letters, like the thanksgiving periods in papyrus letters and introductions of speeches.” Although I affirm that GJohn fits into the Greco-Roman *bios* genre (see footnote 48), here I only adopt the notion that the introduction of an ancient document conveys themes important to the rest of the written work. David

The third reason to view discipleship and benefits in a close relationship is that John intertwines his presentation of discipleship in the context of opposition. Against such animosity toward Jesus' disciples we can view certain themes as benefits of following Jesus in light of the cost of discipleship. Below are select passages that couple discipleship with opposition. In 4:1–3, we read that because the number of Jesus' disciples had increased (and even exceeded the number of John the Baptist's disciples), Jesus left Judea presumably to avoid conflict with the Pharisees. In 9:28, the reciprocal ridicule between “the Jews” and the blind man concerns the question of whose disciple the blind man was, Jesus' or Moses'? In 12:19, the Pharisees' concern of losing their followers to Jesus is expressed when the Pharisees say, “You see, there is nothing you can do. Look, the world has gone after him.”³⁷ In 16:1–2, John depicts Jesus as saying to his disciples, “I have said these things to you to keep you from stumbling.” The “things” to which Jesus is referring are mentioned in 14:1–15:27, which are friendship, love, joy, peace, unity, and abiding. These promises, then, serve as benefits that are extended to promote discipleship and dissuade defection (*σκανδαλίζω*), even in the face of violent opposition for following Jesus (16:1–2). The significance of discipleship to the conflict between Jesus and “the Jews” is further demonstrated by the fact that at the trial of Jesus, the High Priest questions Jesus about his disciples (18:19).

Yet another example in which discipleship is placed in contrast with potential abandonment of Jesus further demonstrates how the promise of a benefit—in this case, the benefit of eternal life—mitigates a potential abandonment of Jesus. In 6:66–69, John narrates the defection (*σκανδαλίζω*) of many followers because of Jesus' difficult teaching on eating his flesh and drinking his blood. In this passage, Jesus turns to the twelve and inquires about their loyalty, exclaiming, “Will you go away also?” (6:67), Peter becomes the spokesperson of “the twelve” when he says, “Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life” (6:68). Peter's depicted reply that communicates commitment to Jesus hinges on his belief that Jesus extends

Edward Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment*, LEC 8 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 186, 208.

eternal life. Thus, I suggest that John constructs this narrative in such a way that his readers may recognize that the antidote to the temptation to defection is the promise of eternal life that is given by Jesus.

I have identified and will argue for three prominent relational themes in GJohn that can be viewed as compensatory benefits of discipleship—membership in the divine family; abiding with the Father and the Son; and royal friendship with Jesus. I consider a benefit prominent on the basis of its frequency of occurrence in the text, or its peculiarity to GJohn, or its placement in GJohn. The prominence of each benefit is independent of the other, that is, each benefit is uniquely defensible as a key motif in GJohn. Admittedly, the reader may more readily identify membership in the divine family as a leading theme, while royal friendship may be less easily discernible as a prominent theme. Nevertheless, I aim to show in chapters 2–4 that these three compensatory benefits of discipleship are prominent and that the other Johannine benefits are derived from one or more of these major benefits. I designate these additional benefits as corollary to the three prominent benefits because they appear in the near context of one or more of the three key benefits. Thus, on the one hand, each prominent benefit serves as a type of literary umbrella for its respective set of corollary benefits; on the other, some of the corollary benefits are found alongside two or more of these prominent benefits. The reason for this overlap between corollary benefits is that the three key benefits are, in fact, not entirely isolated from one another; for to be a member in the divine family suggests that one abides with the Father and the Son through the Spirit, and, similarly, a member of the divine family also experiences royal friendship with Jesus. In the end, while each primary benefit may be studied as an independent category with its corollary benefits, the text of GJohn does demonstrate that the primary benefits and the corollary benefits sometimes exhibit an overlap between the categories.

I classify membership in the divine family as a major benefit because of the prominence of familial terminology (see §2.1) and because of the placement of the family motif in GJohn. The placement of the family theme suggests a chiasm in the

³⁷ Barrett sees this as a Semitic expression, meaning “everyone.” C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According*

prologue with the focal point being in 1:12b (see §1.5; §2.1) and the family motif essentially forms two inclusios: the first inclusio in the public ministry of Jesus (1:12–13 with 12:36) and the second inclusio of the entire Gospel (1:12–13 with 20:17 and 21:5).

Abiding with the Father and the Son is selected as another prominent benefit because of the frequent occurrence of this theme in GJohn (μένω 40 times; μονή 2 times) and because of the peculiar meaning of μένω/μονή in GJohn.

Friendship is treated as a major benefit because of the placement and the peculiar presentation of this theme in the Gospel. In GJohn, the noun φίλος appears six times and always in thematic material that is distinctive to GJohn.³⁸ In the Synoptic Gospels (SG), φίλος appears 16 times,³⁹ with only one occurrence functioning as an appellative for the disciples (Luke 12:4). However, Luke does not expand on his use of φίλος beyond its function as a vocative. Alternatively, I argue that placement and peculiarity of the friendship theme in GJohn suggest that it is a prominent motif (see §4.6).

In summary, there is a juxtaposition of the call to believe with various benefits in the purpose statement, prologue, passages that describe Jesus' purpose for coming into the world, and in passages that feature opposition to discipleship. I propose that John's call to continuous commitment to Jesus should be read in light of these compensatory benefits that are promised to those who continuously follow Jesus (e.g., 12:25–26).

to *St. John*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1978), 420.

³⁸ The term φίλος refers once to John the Baptist as the friend of the bridegroom (3:29); once to Lazarus (11:11), three times to the disciples (15:12–17), and once to the friendship of Caesar and Pilate (19:12).

³⁹ The other Synoptic uses of φίλος refer to neighbors (Luke 11:5–8), associates at meals (Luke 14:10–12), social companions (Luke 15:6–29), business associates (Luke 16:9). The term φίλος is also used with a negative connotation as a designation for Jesus as friend of tax collectors and sinners (Matt 11:19=Luke 7:34). Elsewhere it is used in reference to a centurion's friends (Luke 17:6), to the friendship of Herod and Pilate (Luke 23:12), and to persecution by friends (Luke 21:16).

1.6 The Author and the Audience of GJohn

In this section, I briefly address certain introductory matters to GJohn, a thorough discussion of which is beyond the scope of this thesis. I do not engage in a quest to determine the identity of the author.⁴⁰ Helpful surveys have been published that engage the arguments and counter-arguments for each viewpoint.⁴¹ Consequently, I employ “John” as a referent to the writer of GJohn without making a claim about his identity. Regarding the possible historical setting of GJohn, I address the major scholarly proposals in chapter 5 where I argue for a general setting of conflict between Jewish authorities and Jewish-Christians at the end of the first century CE.⁴²

Coupled with the inquiry into the authorship of GJohn is the question of the identity of the audience.⁴³ Culpepper⁴⁴ and Frey⁴⁵ suggest that the audience of GJohn

⁴⁰ For the provenance of the writing of GJohn, Meeks discusses Galilee, Batanaea, and Ephesus as options: Wayne Meeks, “Breaking Away: Three New Testament Pictures of Christianity’s Separation from the Jewish Communities,” in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us’: Christians, Jews, ‘Others’ in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Caroline McCracken-Flesher (Chico, CA: Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities, 1985), 93–115. For Ephesus: Mikael Tellbe, *Christ-Believers in Ephesus: A Textual Analysis of Early Christian Identity Formation in a Local Perspective*, WUNT 242 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 35–39; Paul Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius*, WUNT 166 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 241–63. For Palestine: John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1976), 296. For Alexandria: William H. Brownlee, “Whence the Gospel according to John?,” in *John and Qumran*, ed. Raymond E. Brown and James H. Charlesworth (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1972), 189–91; William R. Domeris, “Christology and Community: A Study of the Social Matrix of the Fourth Gospel,” *JTSA* 64 (1988): 54. For Syria, see Bultmann, *John*, 12. For multiple geographic areas as part of the writing process, see G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBT (Dallas, TX: Word, 1989), lxxxix–lxxxi.

⁴¹ Barrett, *John*, 100–34; Andreas J. Köstenberger, “Early Doubts of the Apostolic Authorship of the Fourth Gospel in the History of Modern Biblical Criticism,” in *Studies on John and Gender: A Decade of Scholarship* (New York: P. Lang, 2001), 17–47. For discussions about the real author, implied author, and narrator, see Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 4–9, 15–49; Tolmie, *Farewell*, 13–21, 33–62; Tovey, *Narrative*, 35, 45–68.

⁴² The common scholarly view of the dating of GJohn is 85–100 CE. See Johannes Behm, Werner Georg Kümmel, and Paul Feine, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans., Jr. A. J. Mattill, Revised ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 175; Tellbe, *Christ-Believers*, 35; Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 272. Robinson has challenged the late first century date, proposing 65 CE as the date of the final form of GJohn; however, most scholars continue to hold the generally accepted later date. Wallace has tentatively defended a pre-70 CE date. Robinson, *Redating*, 307; Daniel B. Wallace, “John 5,2 and the Date of the Fourth Gospel,” *Bib* 71 no. 2 (1990): 177–205. My thesis is not reliant on a specific date, thus either option is appropriate for my argument.

⁴³ For summaries of the various views on background and audience, see Jörg Frey, “The Diaspora-Jewish Background of the Fourth Gospel,” *SEA* 77 (2012): 169–96; Peter Manzanga Vhumani Magezi, “A Study to Establish The Most Plausible Background to The Fourth Gospel (John),” *TS* 66 no. 1 (2010): Article 769 pp.1–7. Bauckham argues for a general audience, Richard Bauckham, ed. *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans,

is the Diaspora-Jews,⁴⁶ probably situated in Asia Minor.⁴⁷ Although I concur with Culpepper and Frey, the viability of my thesis does not hinge on a specific author, provenance of the author, or audience.⁴⁸

1998). For a Hellenistic audience, see Bultmann, *John*. For a Jewish audience, Dodd writes, “In the Fourth Gospel the followers of Christ are threatened with excommunication from the synagogue—a menace which would have no terrors for any but Jewish Christians. They may have to face martyrdom, but it is clearly at the hands of their fellow-Jews, since the persecutors believe themselves to be rendering service to God.” C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), 412; Hwang, “Identity of the Recipients,” 688; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters*, BTNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 260; Robinson, *Redating*, 274–75. For Diaspora Jews as the audience, see Frey, “Diaspora,” 169–96; Unnik, “The Purpose of St. John’s Gospel,” 382–411.

⁴⁴ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 211–27.

⁴⁵ Frey, “Diaspora,” 169–96.

⁴⁶ Similarly, Carson, *John*, 91; Frey, “Diaspora,” 190–96; Ridderbos, “Prologue,” 60; Tellbe, *Christ-Believers*, 58–65.

⁴⁷ For Ephesus as the audience of GJohn, see Brown et al., *Introduction*, 202–6; Mary L. Coloe, *Dwelling in the Household of God: Johannine Ecclesiology and Spirituality* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 5; Frey, “Diaspora,” 190; Martin Hengel, *The Johannine Question* (London: SCM, 1989), 124–35; Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 241–63. For Palestine: Robinson, *Redating*, 296 fn. 196. For Syria: Behm et al., *Introduction*, 175; Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1982), 2:178.

⁴⁸ Conversely, Richard Bauckham and his student Edward Klink have defended a broad audience for the Gospels based on the understanding that the most probable genre of the Gospels is the Graeco-Roman *bios*. I agree with Bauckham and Klink that *bios* is the most fitting genre of GJohn but I do not necessarily see a corollary between genre and the scope of the Gospel’s audience. Ashton recently critiqued Bauckham’s and Klink’s association between genre and audience/setting of GJohn; and Ashton also critiqued Burridge’s defense that the Gospels are Graeco-Roman *bioi*. Instead, Ashton suggests that the Gospels cannot be called merely *bioi* but should be identified more specifically, keeping in mind the Gospels’ theological and pastoral purpose. Ashton elsewhere labels the Gospels as “proclamatory narratives” (27) and defines the Gospel as “a narrative of the public career of Jesus, his passion and death, told in order to affirm or confirm the faith of Christian believers in the Risen Lord” (332). Prior to the dialogue between Bauckham/Klink and Ashton, Aune conveyed a similar position. Aune argued that the Gospels are a subtype of Greco-Roman biography and that the Gospels were “written to persuade their audiences that the crucified and risen Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. The Gospels, then, are fundamentally Christian literary propaganda” (59). Aune subscribes to the *bios* genre but maintains the hortatory purpose of each Gospel. John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 332, see pp. 24–27 for fuller discussion; John Ashton, *The Gospel of John and Christian Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 23–29; 75–76; Aune, *Literary Environment*, 17–76; Bauckham, ed. *Gospels*; Richard A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, ed. G. N. Stanton, SNTSMS 70 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Edward W. Klink, *The Audience of the Gospels: The Origin and Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity*, LNTS 353 (London: T & T Clark, 2010). For a response to Bauckham, see Philip F. Esler, “Community and Gospel in Early Christianity: A Response to Richard Bauckham’s Gospels for all Christians,” *SJT* 51 no. 2 (1998): 235–48.

1.7 Scope, Assumptions, and Limitations

First, I work with the text of GJohn as it appears in its final form, including the prologue and epilogue. Because my study is not based on a source-critical or form-critical approach to GJohn, I do not discuss the development of the text through various stages such as proposed by Raymond Brown.⁴⁹ Additionally, my study is limited to GJohn rather than extending to the entire Johannine corpus.

Second, although belief and expression of belief in the characterization of the individuals are essential elements of the study of discipleship in GJohn, this thesis is limited to an evaluation of the benefits of following Jesus. Where appropriate, I support my assertions concerning the benefits of discipleship with illustrations of individual responses to the invitation to follow Jesus. However, character studies do not feature prominently in this thesis.⁵⁰

Third, the references to the followers in Jesus as Jewish believers/Jewish Christians are not intended as commentary on the provenance of the Gospel.⁵¹ Instead, I derive this ethnic nomenclature from the references to the synagogues (9:22; 12:42; 16:2), the temple (2:13–22), the festivals (2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 7:2; 10:22; 11:55), and other elements of the Jewish identity described in GJohn (1:38, 41). By using these culture-specific references, the author seems to presuppose a Jewish identity of his readers, and this is the position I assume in my argument.

Fourth, I recognize that the aforementioned three primary benefits are images deployed by John to convey relational intimacy between the disciples and the Father and the Son through the Spirit. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to delve into the philosophical arguments concerning metaphoric language or to build a theory of

⁴⁹ Brown, *John*, xxxiv–xxxix; Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979); Brown et al., *Introduction*, 74–86.

⁵⁰ For character studies in GJohn, see Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*; Cornelis Bennema, *A Theory of Character in New Testament Narrative* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014); Raymond F. Collins, *These Things Have Been Written: Studies on the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 1–45, 56–86; Steven A. Hunt, D. F. Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann, eds., *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, WUNT 314 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013). For my review of certain works on characterization, see §1.8.3.

⁵¹ See §1.6.

metaphor.⁵² Rather, I use the symbolic terms image, symbol, or metaphor interchangeably to refer to family, abiding, and friendship as images that John deploys to convey intimacy in the discipleship relationship.⁵³

Fifth, the use of the title “the Jews” in this thesis is not intended to be pejorative,⁵⁴ but is adopted directly from GJohn to identify the group of individuals who are depicted in certain scenes as antagonistic toward Jesus and/or his followers.⁵⁵

Sixth, the term “disciples” is used in the broad sense as a referent to any believer and follower of Jesus who attaches himself or herself to Jesus rather than a referent to “the twelve” or to individuals explicitly designated as “disciples” (e.g., 21:1–2).

1.8 Literature Review

The thematization of discipleship in GJohn has been a vibrant area of research. Johannine scholars have generally focused their studies on characterization of the disciples⁵⁶ and on discipleship as a theme through the lenses of friendship,⁵⁷ family,⁵⁸ covenant,⁵⁹ life,⁶⁰ Christology,⁶¹ agency,⁶² mission,⁶³ the descent-ascent

⁵² For a theory of metaphor in GJohn, see J. G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, BIS 47 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 1–160.

⁵³ For discussion of Johannine symbolism, see Köstenberger, *Theology*, 155–67. For discussion of the symbolism of the Johannine “signs,” see Barrett, *John*, 75–78; Köstenberger, *Theology*, 323–35.

⁵⁴ For studies on anti-Judaism and GJohn, see R. Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt, and F. Vandecasteele-Vanneuville, eds., *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel: Papers of the Leuven Colloquium, 2000*, JCHS 1 (Assen, Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum, 2001).

⁵⁵ See §5.3 for my treatment of “the Jews” in GJohn.

⁵⁶ For characterization in GJohn, see Margaret M. Beirne, *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel: A Genuine Discipleship of Equals*, JSNTSup 242 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003); Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*; Bennema, *Character*; F. W. Burnett, “Characterization and Reader Construction of Characters in the Gospels,” *Semeia* 63 (1993): 3–28; Collins, *These Things*, 1–86; Colleen M. Conway, *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization*, SBLDS 167 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 1999); Colleen M. Conway, “Speaking Through Ambiguity: Minor Characters in the Fourth Gospel,” *BibInt* 10 no. 3 (2002): 324–41; Hunt et al., eds., *Character Studies*; Susan Hylen, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).

⁵⁷ Martin M. Culy, *Echoes of Friendship in the Gospel of John*, NTM 30 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Press, 2010); J. Massyngberde Ford, *Redeemer-Friend and Mother: Salvation in Antiquity and in the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1997); Sharon H. Ringe, *Wisdom’s Friends: Community and Christology in the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999).

⁵⁸ Van der Watt, *Family*.

motif,⁶⁴ and others. While there is an abundance of scholarship on Johannine discipleship, the discussion below demonstrates that scholars have not sufficiently examined the benefits of discipleship. Furthermore, those who have addressed the benefits of discipleship have typically filtered the kaleidoscope of Johannine features and themes related to discipleship through a single lens (e.g., family or eternal life). In my thesis, however, I have identified three primary advantages associated with discipleship that John deploys to convey the relational benefits of following Jesus—family, abiding, and friendship. Due to the extensive number of works published related to Johannine discipleship, I have divided my survey of the history of research into three categories. I begin with works that deal directly with discipleship in GJohn. The second category discusses publications that are considered prominent works in the field and that provide general surveys of Johannine discipleship. The final category examines works on characterization of the disciples in GJohn. This latter group of works is not directly related to my thesis inquiry, but since I employ certain characters illustratively in my thesis, I consider the key works on the characterization of the disciples briefly. For the sake of convenience, I discuss the works in each category chronologically.

1.8.1 Key Works on Discipleship in GJohn

In 1980, Vellanickal⁶⁵ examined the process of becoming and remaining a disciple. Vellanickal studied John 1:35–42 and identified nine elements of discipleship: election and call, human testimony, hearing, following, seeking, finding, coming and seeing, remaining with Jesus, and missionary sharing.⁶⁶ He proposed three conditions for discipleship: remaining in the word (8:31–32), hating one’s life (12:25), and

⁵⁹ Rekha M. Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006).

⁶⁰ David Asonye Ihenacho, *The Community of Eternal Life: The Study of the Meaning of Life for the Johannine Community* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001).

⁶¹ Hera, *Christology*.

⁶² Dirk G. Van der Merwe, “Towards A Theological Understanding Of Johannine Discipleship,” *Neot* 31 no. 2 (1997): 339–59.

⁶³ Köstenberger, *Missions*.

⁶⁴ Van der Merwe, “Johannine Discipleship,” 339–59.

⁶⁵ Matthew Vellanickal, “Discipleship according to the Gospel of John,” *Jeev* 10 (1980): 131–47.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 134.

serving Jesus (12:26). Vellanickal prioritized the condition of hating one's life and did not discuss more commonly recurring conditions for discipleship such as obedience and prayer. He also did not reference the author's use of family imagery in the experience of discipleship, even though it is a recurring Johannine motif (e.g., 1:12–13; 20:17; 21:5).

In 1982, Segovia applied redaction-criticism to the meaning of ἀγάπη/ἀγαπάω in GJohn and in 1 John to discern whether or not John 13:34–35; 15:1–17; 15:18–16:15 originate in a common *Sitz im Leben* with 1 John. Segovia concluded that 1 John and GJohn reflect two different authors who project different meanings to ἀγάπη/ἀγαπάω because their respective works are situated in a different *Sitz im Leben*.⁶⁷ Segovia notes that 1 John presents love in the context of an intra-church struggle, whereas the writer of GJohn situates love in the community's conflict with the synagogue.⁶⁸ Segovia's exception to this general conclusion is that in contrast with the rest of the Gospel, 13:34–35 and 15:1–17 reflect a similar *Sitz im Leben* to that of 1 John.⁶⁹ He further suggested that the writer of 1 John inserted John 15–17 into the Gospel in order to solve "certain practical problems that had arisen in the community,"⁷⁰ and thereby affect the ethical tone of the Gospel.⁷¹ While investigating the meaning of ἀγάπη/ἀγαπάω, Segovia defined discipleship as abiding in correct belief and abiding in love,⁷² with the latter being the expression and authentication of the former.⁷³ Thus, discipleship is the execution of Jesus' command to love.⁷⁴ While Segovia identified love and obedience as expressions of discipleship, he limited his study to the theme of love and did not treat the benefits of discipleship. Moreover, Segovia approached his investigation as a redaction-critic whereas my approach is to treat the text in its current form, paying close attention to the text in its historical-narrative context. Additionally, Segovia explained John

⁶⁷ Fernando F. Segovia, *Love Relationships in the Johannine Tradition*, SBLDS 58 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 1–3, 22–24.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 179.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 119–21, 125, 191–92.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 217.

⁷¹ Ibid., 117–19, 125, 191.

⁷² Ibid., 124.

⁷³ Ibid., 117–18.

15:1–17 through the Jewish imagery of the vineyard and did not engage the possibility of the Hellenistic conceptual background of royal friendship.⁷⁵ In contrast, I examine a variety of conceptual backgrounds to John 15:12–17 (see §4.4; §4.6) and I conclude that the Hellenistic practice of royal friendship is a viable option for the background of friendship in GJohn. In sum, while Segovia discusses certain aspects of discipleship only tangentially, I address specifically the question of what are John’s benefits of discipleship.

In 1991, Segovia published *The Farewell of the Word* in which he applied the “integrative approach” (literary, structural, and sociological-rhetorical methods) to John 13:31–16:33. He analyzed these chapters as a farewell speech of a dying hero, comparing the content of these passages to similar farewell scenes in Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian literature.⁷⁶ Whereas in 1982 Segovia denied the literary unity of GJohn,⁷⁷ in *The Farewell of the Word*, he approached John 13:31–16:33 “as an artistic and strategic whole with a highly unified and coherent literary structure and development, unified and coherent strategic concerns and aims, and a distinctive rhetorical situation.”⁷⁸ He evaluated 13:31–16:33 synchronically, that is, in the context of the ancient farewell speeches, and diachronically, viewing its compositional history in response to the needs within the Johannine community. Segovia argued that 13:31–16:33 reflects “a call to an embattled Christian community to abide and endure in an oppressive world.”⁷⁹

Segovia demonstrates mastery of the conceptual background of the ancient farewell scenes and applies the redactionistic method with excellence in his work. While Segovia’s work is a painstakingly thorough analysis of 13:31–16:33, he omits 13:1–30 and chapter 17. Moreover, his study does not sufficiently focus on the intended impact of GJohn on the reader as Segovia’s work is consumed with the literary and rhetorical analysis of 13:31–16:33. My study supplements Segovia’s work in that I examine aspects of discipleship in the entire Gospel. Also, like

⁷⁴ Ibid., 123–24.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 97–121.

⁷⁶ Segovia, *Farewell*, 1–58.

⁷⁷ Fernando F. Segovia, “The Theology and Provenance of John 15:1–17,” *JBL* 101 no. 1 (1982): 115.

⁷⁸ Segovia, *Farewell*, 284.

Segovia, I feature John's pastoral aim that is intertwined with discipleship, but my aim is to evaluate how John presents the benefits of discipleship, especially those in the FD, as a way to promote continuous discipleship.

In 1995, Tolmie applied the narratological model to John 13–17 in order to observe the way in which the implied author leads the implied reader to the author's perspective on discipleship.⁸⁰ Tolmie employed Greimas' semiotic square theory⁸¹ to argue that the implied author of GJohn presents true discipleship in contrast with false discipleship/world.⁸² The three traits of true discipleship are love, knowledge, and obedience,⁸³ all of which characterize Jesus and thus give Johannine discipleship a christological base. Relevant for my thesis is Tolmie's final chapter, which develops the expectations of true disciples⁸⁴ and affirms that John draws out select benefits of discipleship from the FD⁸⁵ "as an encouragement and motivation to the implied reader to be faithful as a disciple."⁸⁶ While I agree that John presents the benefits of discipleship to motivate commitment to Jesus, my study differs from Tolmie's in four respects.

First, Tolmie's study is limited to the FD whereas I examine the entire Gospel. Furthermore, my focus is chiefly on the *benefits* of discipleship whereas Tolmie is more concerned with the narrator's presentation of the nature of discipleship. Second, while Tolmie mentions that abiding has a future dimension, he does not engage other interpretations of 14:2–3 (e.g., household).⁸⁷ Similarly, while Tolmie affirms friendship as a benefit, he does not extensively discuss other interpretations of Johannine friendship.⁸⁸ My study, however, does consider other interpretations of 14:2–3; also, my discussion of friendship goes into greater depth than that of Tolmie. Third, Tolmie does not discuss the imagery of family in GJohn

⁷⁹ Ibid., 328.

⁸⁰ Tolmie, *Farewell*, 13, 23–28, 191.

⁸¹ The Semiotic square theory suggests that "meaning is established in terms of difference." Ibid., 64–95, citing 66. See also A. J. Greimas, "Elements of a Narrative Grammar," *Diacritics* 7 (1977): 23–40.

⁸² Tolmie, *Farewell*, 70–73, 76–77, 228.

⁸³ Ibid., 70.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 190–229.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 85–95, 190–229.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 185, 213, 218, citing 229.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 203–4.

as a benefit, while I propose that it is a prominent benefit of discipleship. Fourth, whereas Tolmie rightly views John's promotion of discipleship against the setting of opposition, Tolmie also holds that this antagonism is in the context of the *Birkat ha-Minim* and Jamnia, which I show in chapter 5 is not a defensible reconstruction of the setting of GJohn.⁸⁹ In sum, while Tolmie's work does mention certain benefits of discipleship in the FD (e.g., protection, sanctification, friendship), my work examines the benefits of discipleship in greater depth throughout the entire Gospel.

In 2000, Van der Watt proposed that the majority of John's themes are subsumed within the metaphor of family.⁹⁰ After developing the theory of metaphor,⁹¹ Van der Watt argued that the family imagery is the most prominent metaphorical network in GJohn.⁹² He suggested that John develops this metaphor syntactically and semantically, and in light of certain social conventions from the ancient Mediterranean world such that "these conventions are associatively activated during the reading process in the reader who is familiar with them."⁹³ Thus, for example, friendship should not be seen as an independent metaphor, but rather "as the enrichment of the existing familial relations."⁹⁴ Van der Watt demonstrates extensive interaction with primary and secondary literature as well as exegetical depth in defending the centrality of the family metaphor. Moreover, his attempt to integrate all of the Johannine imagery, symbols, and teaching of Jesus related to discipleship within the family network is a massive undertaking that Van der Watt achieves with high level of competency. Yet, it seems too simplistic to tie in all of the Johannine imagery under the single motif of family. The breadth of John's symbolism and metaphorical language is widely recognized in scholarship⁹⁵ and no single image seems to encompass seamlessly John's variety. Consequently, I propose it is more appropriate to view John's diverse terminology, symbolism, and themes as

⁸⁸ Ibid., 212–13.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 3, 84 fn. 43.

⁹⁰ Van der Watt, *Family*.

⁹¹ Ibid., 1–160.

⁹² Ibid., 161, 397, 400–1.

⁹³ Ibid., 162.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 365 fn. 1053.

⁹⁵ For example, Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 149–202; Köstenberger, *Theology*, 127–70, 341–54.

belonging to the greater theme of discipleship, which is the purpose for the writing of the Gospel alongside its christological aim (20:30–31).⁹⁶ I further engage Van der Watt's work on pertinent points within the thesis, especially in chapters 3 and 5.

In 2002, Bennema investigated discipleship in relation to soteriology. More specifically, he studied the relationship between Jesus as Wisdom incarnate and the source of salvation. He stressed that the Spirit is the agent of salvation who discloses Jesus' teaching to the individual to arrive at and sustain salvation.⁹⁷ Bennema proposed that the soteriological effect of W/wisdom and the Spirit is best understood against the sapiential Jewish background.⁹⁸ Bennema formulated a nexus of Spirit-salvation-W/wisdom in GJohn in order to understand how the readers of GJohn enter and remain in salvation.⁹⁹ He suggested that the Spirit is a "soteriological necessity,"¹⁰⁰ for it is the Spirit who creates the saving relationship between a believer and God¹⁰¹ and sustains that relationship by enabling the believer to be in continuous discipleship¹⁰² with Jesus by being reminded of his teaching.¹⁰³ The Spirit mediates Jesus' presence to his disciples as the second Paraclete, continuing the first Paraclete's work, and functions as the bond of union and the mode of communication between the Father, the Son, and the believer.¹⁰⁴ The individual who enters and continues in such a salvific relationship¹⁰⁵ enjoys benefits derived from continuous discipleship.¹⁰⁶

My thesis differs from Bennema's work in a number of key points. Bennema's goal is to study the Spirit's soteriological function in GJohn in light of the insights from sapiential Jewish writings; consequently, Bennema discusses the benefits of discipleship only tangentially. Additionally, while Bennema limited the

⁹⁶ See §1.3 the discussion of the Gospels' purpose statement.

⁹⁷ Bennema, *Power*, 35–39.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1–39, 44–51, 252.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 222.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 247.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 222.

¹⁰⁵ See §1.4 footnote 31 for Bennema's definition of discipleship.

¹⁰⁶ Bennema, *Power*, 131, 136, 154.

conceptual background of his study to sapiential Judaism,¹⁰⁷ I investigate the possible Hellenistic background of John's themes related to discipleship. Both Bennema and I affirm the general setting of conflict behind GJohn,¹⁰⁸ but in chapter 5 I suggest that this backdrop of the conflict between "the Jews" and John's readers may aid to explain John's emphasis on the benefits of continuous discipleship (e.g., 20:30–31). With my study, I hope to complement Bennema's insights regarding the Johannine portrayal of discipleship by developing the benefits derived from discipleship.

In 2006, Chennattu¹⁰⁹ approached discipleship from a theological perspective, examining discipleship in light of the OT covenant terminology. She argued that in 1:35–51, the disciples are initiated into an OT type of covenant relationship with Jesus. In this passage, she observed allusions to the OT covenantal relationship in the themes of election, abiding, knowledge of God, witnessing, renaming of individuals, and promises.¹¹⁰ She then suggested that the repeated call to believe and make a decision for Jesus in John 1–12 reflects the call made to Israel in Deut 26:16–27:26 and Exod 23:20–33.¹¹¹ She posited that the relationship between John 1–12 and 13–17 is comparable to Josh 24:1–28 in that John 1–12 contains the hortatory material in preparation for the covenant renewal contained in John 13–17.¹¹² The covenant renewal in John 13–17 is rooted in the covenantal themes of election, intimate abiding, indwelling presence, obedience to God's commands, and mutual knowledge between Jesus and the disciples, which reflect covenant renewal with the disciples and the consecration of the covenant community.¹¹³ In John 20–21, the new covenant community is constituted through Jesus' interactions with his followers, when Jesus affirms their relationship with God (20:17), gives the Spirit (20:22), commissions them (20:21), and confirms his empowering presence (21:1–23).¹¹⁴ According to

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 36–37, 42–44.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 35 fn. 159, 251–52.

¹⁰⁹ Chennattu, *Discipleship*.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 41–49.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 70, 88.

¹¹² Ibid., 68–69.

¹¹³ Ibid., 89–139.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 140–79.

Chennattu, chapters 20–21 contain the “realization of the covenant promises and the actualization of the community of the disciples as God’s children.”¹¹⁵

While Chennattu’s proposal of covenant discipleship capitalizes upon the OT imagery in GJohn, the Hellenistic background to friendship and family motifs is also a viable option (see discussion in chapters 3 and 5). Moreover, it is noteworthy that Chennattu views “covenant” as a paradigm for discipleship, but as she admits,¹¹⁶ the term “covenant” never appears in the Gospel; this is an important omission, considering the Gospel’s conceptual and lexical allusions to the OT (e.g., *σκηνώ* in 1:14). Furthermore, at times, Chennattu appears to force certain themes into her paradigm.¹¹⁷ For example, she interprets the foot-washing episode as entrance into the covenant relationship with Jesus. She defends her stance by tracing *μέρος* (13:8) to the LXX use of *μέρος* (מֶרֶץ) in reference to each tribe’s portion in the inheritance of the Promised Land.¹¹⁸ Yet the meaning of the foot-washing scene is explained in 13:13–16, which is simply to imitate Jesus in his self-sacrifice. Additionally, Chennattu’s argument primarily hinges on chapters 13–17; however, since discipleship is a central theme in GJohn, the entire Gospel should be used in support of a discipleship paradigm not only chapters 13–17. Chennattu also does not integrate the leitmotif of eternal life into her paradigm of covenant discipleship, even though *ζωή* is a central theme in GJohn. Thus, in contrast with Chennattu’s work, my inquiry focuses on the benefits of discipleship and approaches Johannine discipleship with a broader conceptual background than Chennattu’s OT covenant framework.

In 2013 Culy asserted that friendship is the main image of discipleship.¹¹⁹ Specifically, Culy suggested that John uses friendship terminology to describe the relationship between Jesus and the Father.¹²⁰ Moreover, Culy examined friendship in

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 179.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 210.

¹¹⁷ Similarly, Sandra Schneiders, review of “*Johannine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship*” *CBQ* 69 no. 3 (July 2007): 575–76.

¹¹⁸ Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 91–99.

¹¹⁹ Culy writes: “The language of friendship pervades the Fourth Gospel from beginning to end and serves as a primary vehicle for characterizing the relationships that are introduced in the Prologue and fleshed out throughout the course of the narrative.” Culy, *Echoes*, 178.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 87–129, 152, 165, 178.

the Greco-Roman writings¹²¹ and identified three primary friendship ideals that are also present in GJohn in the Father-Son relationship: mutuality, unity, and equality.¹²² Culy argued that John describes the relationship between Jesus and the disciples with the same three ideals, and this led Culy to conclude that the same friendship intimacy that the Father and Son share is also true of the friendship intimacy between Jesus and the disciples.¹²³ Culy's novel interpretation falls short in that it lacks strong lexical support since John does not use the term φίλος to describe Jesus' relationship with God. In the ancient writings, Culy's three friendship ideals are indeed juxtaposed with friendship terminology. In GJohn, however, while these three ideals might be present, they are nonetheless severed from φίλος, which points to the lack of the lexical support for Culy's claims.¹²⁴ While I contend that friendship is a key motif in GJohn, I refrain from asserting that John deploys it as a "primary vehicle"¹²⁵ to characterize the relationships in GJohn. My suggestion that friendship is one of three key benefits is rooted in the peculiar meaning of Johannine friendship from the exegesis of 15:12–17 (see §4.6.2), rather than being based on a statistical analysis of φίλος in GJohn. I engage Culy's argument more thoroughly in chapter 4.

In 2013, Hera argued that Johannine discipleship has its basis in Johannine Christology.¹²⁶ Whereas the relationship between discipleship and Christology was previously discussed by De Jonge,¹²⁷ Pazdan,¹²⁸ and Baffes,¹²⁹ Hera focuses on John

¹²¹ Ibid., 49, 84. He also examined the Jewish and early Christian writings but limited the three notions of friendship to be sourced in the Greco-Roman documents.

¹²² Ibid., 33, 91, 130, 178–179.

¹²³ Ibid., 32, 130–77.

¹²⁴ See discussion in chapter 5.

¹²⁵ Culy, *Echoes*, 178.

¹²⁶ Hera, *Christology*, 36, 168.

¹²⁷ Marinus de Jonge, *Jesus: Stranger from Heaven and Son of God*, RBS 11 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 3.

¹²⁸ Pazdan only tangentially noted that Jesus is the model disciple of the Father as illustrated in his fulfillment of a soteriological work on behalf of the disciples. Pazdan, "Discipleship," 337–41.

¹²⁹ Baffes similarly affirms a close relationship between Christology and discipleship. She uses this relationship to argue that John 7:37–39 is intentionally ambiguous in order to account for both Jesus and the believer being the sources of living water. Melanie Baffes, "Christology and Discipleship in John 7:37–38," *BTB* 41 no. 3 (2011): 144–50.

17 and argues that Christology is a primary motif in GJohn.¹³⁰ Jesus himself is presented as the “prime model of authentic discipleship.”¹³¹ Hera’s study culminates with exegesis of John 17. He argues that this passage should be read through the references to ἡ ὥρα, since the passage appears between the coming of ἡ ὥρα (12:23) and the completion of ἡ ὥρα (John 18–20), that is, Jesus’ glorification through his suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection.¹³² Hera’s work cogently links the faith responses of the disciples to the christological teaching in the entire Gospel. As I state in §1.3, I agree with Hera’s reading of the theme of discipleship through Christology; thus, my work builds on his as I focus on the benefits derived from a discipleship that finds its basis in Christology.

1.8.2 General Works on GJohn that Feature Discipleship

In contrast to the previous section where I reviewed works that focused specifically on Johannine discipleship, here I discuss publications that are not exclusively devoted to discipleship, but which feature aspects of discipleship and which have contributed to the development of Johannine discipleship as part of a larger study in GJohn.

The early studies of Johannine discipleship focused on the manifestations of commitment to Jesus, mostly featuring following Jesus as the main expression of discipleship. I, however, focus on the compensatory benefits of discipleship and answer the question why one should continuously follow Jesus. In 1960, Schweizer¹³³ argued that discipleship is crystallized in following Jesus as the Exalted

¹³⁰ Similarly, James D. G. Dunn, “Let John be John: A Gospel for its Time,” in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien: Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982*, ed. Peter Stuhlmacher (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), 317–18.

¹³¹ Hera, *Christology*, 36.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 127, 130, 173.

¹³³ Eduard Schweizer, *Lordship and Discipleship* (London, England: SCM, 1960), 77–92. Schweizer’s emphasis on following Jesus is reaffirmed by Betz (i.e., following is manifested in imitation) and Schultz (i.e., to follow is to be in life community with Jesus). Hans Dieter Betz, “Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament” (Habilitationsschrift, Mainz, 1967), 36–43; Anselm Schulz, *Nachfolgen und Nachahmen; Studien über das Verhältnis der neutestamentlichen Jüngerschaft zur urchristlichen Vorbildethik*, SANT 6 (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1962), 134–44. Additionally, in 1967 Schweizer published a joint work with Hahn and Strobel as they examined Pre-Easter discipleship, discipleship in light of the Easter-event, and post-Easter discipleship in the Gospels and Pauline literature. This study further reaffirmed the importance of a personal relationship

One through obedience to Jesus' teaching, allegiance to him as the only shepherd, and mutual knowledge between Jesus and the disciple.¹³⁴ The disciple is to follow Jesus through suffering and self-denial, ultimately into the presence of the Father.¹³⁵ In 1962, Andre Feuillet¹³⁶ arrived at similar conclusions in his diachronic study of Johannine discipleship by observing parallels between the eucharistic imagery of John 6 and sapiential Wisdom. Like Schweizer, he concluded that discipleship is about attachment to Jesus and following Jesus,¹³⁷ which is demonstrated through a commitment to Jesus as visible in the disciples' mutual love and unity.¹³⁸ These scholars rightly focus on the image of following Jesus since it is a prominent motif in GJohn. The verb ἀκολουθέω (follow) appears 19 times in the Gospel, with 17 uses referring to following Jesus (1:37, 38, 40, 43; 6:2; 8:12; 10:4, 5, 27; 12:26; 13:36 (2x), 37; 18:15; 21:19, 20, 22).¹³⁹ Moreover, the image of following Jesus forms an inclusio in GJohn since the mandate "follow me" appears at the start (1:43) and at the end of the Gospel (21:19, 22). However, while John certainly spotlights the image of following Jesus, it is important to recognize that it is only one of the numerous expressions of discipleship (e.g., see also witnessing to (15:27), serving (12:26), and abiding in Jesus (15:1–11)).

In 1971, Jiménez¹⁴⁰ approached Johannine discipleship theologically by integrating trinitarian theology into the investigation. Jiménez argued that "the concept of a 'disciple' in the Fourth Gospel is not just a mere human category, but a theological concept, which can only be explained and understood under direct and

with Jesus to discipleship. I take issue with Hahn's assertion that in Jesus' pre-Easter ministry, "it is not his person which forms the centre of his own proclamation but rather his mission." Conversely, Hera has argued persuasively that John's exhortation to discipleship is rooted in the person of Jesus as the Christ. Hahn et al., *Die Anfänge*, citing 22; Ferdinand Hahn, August Strobel, and Eduard Schweizer, *The Beginnings of the Church in the New Testament*, trans., Iain and Ute Nicol (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1970); Hera, *Christology*.

¹³⁴ Schweizer, *Lordship and Discipleship*, 83.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 85.

¹³⁶ Feuillet, *Études*.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 107.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 109–12.

¹³⁹ The other two uses are in 20:6 where ἀκολουθέω refers to Peter following the BD, and in 11:31 where ἀκολουθέω refers to Mary being followed by "the Jews."

¹⁴⁰ Ramón Moreno Jiménez, "El Discipulo de Jesucristo segun el evangelio de S. Juan," *Est Bib* 30 (1971): 269–311. For criticism of Jiménez's theological interpretive lens, see Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 3–5.

divine revelation.”¹⁴¹ Furthermore, he stressed that “This relationship [discipleship] will come from the Father; it will be realized through the Son, and completed by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁴² Jiménez’s work is a general survey of Johannine discipleship inasmuch as he examines the meaning of μαθητής in 8:31; 13:35; 15:1–12, and analyzes the traits of discipleship as expressed by the twelve, Joseph of Arimathea, and the Beloved Disciple. While Jiménez approached discipleship theologically, I examine it through the historical and narrational lenses as I focus on the compensatory benefits of commitment to Jesus.

Schnackenburg¹⁴³ investigated discipleship ecclesialogically, with a view toward the Johannine community. He argued that John’s main goal was “to provide the community with a deep vision of Christ as well as his aim to strengthen its members in their struggle for faith and their attempt to preserve their own faith.”¹⁴⁴ In 1977, de Jonge¹⁴⁵ merged the questions of the Johannine community, the centrality of Christology,¹⁴⁶ and the role of the Holy Spirit in discipleship. De Jonge identified abiding as the distinguishing mark of the inner circle of the disciples in contrast with the wider circles of Jesus’ followers.¹⁴⁷ He defined true disciples as those who “listen, see, believe, overcome offence, remain with Jesus and follow him”;¹⁴⁸ and he argued that discipleship is a process in which the Spirit leads believers to a fuller understanding¹⁴⁹ since “the Spirit acts as representative and interpreter of the Son, just as the Son acts as the representative of the Father.”¹⁵⁰ Building on Schnackenburg’s and de Jonge’s ecclesiological, christological, and pneumatological insights into discipleship within the Johannine community, I examine the benefits gained from participation in such a community. Thus, my study

¹⁴¹ Jiménez, “El Discipulo,” 288.

¹⁴² Ibid., 289.

¹⁴³ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, trans., David Smith and G. A. Kon, 3 vols. (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 3:203–17.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 3:217. Similarly, de Jonge concluded in favor of GJohn reflecting a theology of a particular community within the church, which stands in opposition to Jewish, and other christological views. de Jonge, *Stranger*, 99.

¹⁴⁵ de Jonge, *Stranger*.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 3, esp. 141–68, 193–222.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 12–15.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 14.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 120.

complements these two works by developing their conclusions concerning the expressions and benefits of discipleship.

In 1998, Köstenberger focused his theological study of GJohn on the missions of Jesus and the disciples as a subset of the discipleship motif.¹⁵¹ Köstenberger argued that John's focus on Jesus being sent by God, coming into the world, returning to the Father, and calling people to follow him favors the missionary purpose of GJohn (*Missionsschrift* rather than *Gemeindeschrift*).¹⁵² Köstenberger suggested that John widens the meaning of μαθητής to include all of Jesus' true believers who form a new messianic community, the mission of which is to harvest spiritual fruit within God's eschatological economy of salvation.¹⁵³ While Köstenberger's study is invaluable to the theme of mission in discipleship, he does not sufficiently explain the benefits of participating in Jesus' mission as a disciple. Thus my work complements Köstenberger's by investigating these potential benefits.

In 2001, Resseguie developed the narratological reading of GJohn by examining how the author of GJohn uses his subjective point of view (POV) to convince the reader to adopt the narrator's POV of the message and of the characters in GJohn.¹⁵⁴ From the prologue, the Word's POV is set against the world's POV and thus "the strangeness of opposing POV is assured."¹⁵⁵ Resseguie examines the narrator's POV through five planes—spatial, temporal, phraseological, psychological, and ideological—to show the narrator's POV as being "from above."¹⁵⁶ For example, the spatial POV teaches that a character's physical distance is correlated to her spiritual relationship with Jesus. The narrator uses the temporal POV to underscore what is important in the narrative through the pace of the narrative. The phraseological POV (e.g., irony, misunderstanding, and double

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 11.

¹⁵¹ Köstenberger, *Missions*, 177. In 1997, Van der Merwe examined the mission of Jesus as a theological setting for discipleship, viewing mission in light of the ancient descent-ascent schema and the agency motif. Van der Merwe, "Johannine Discipleship," 339–59.

¹⁵² Köstenberger, *Missions*, 199–210.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 161–85.

¹⁵⁴ James L. Resseguie, *The Strange Gospel: Narrative Design and Point of View in John*, BIS 56 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1–3, 22.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 197.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 200–1.

entendre in GJohn) confronts the reader with the spiritual side of life.¹⁵⁷ The psychological POV exposes the superficiality of the dominant material POV in the text.¹⁵⁸ With each POV, Resseguie observes the narrator's spiritual lessons behind the material POV in the text who forms the ideological POV, which is "from above" in contrast with the material POV that is "from below."¹⁵⁹

Resseguie's primary contribution to the theme of discipleship is to link the Johannine characters to the Gospel's ideology rather than to evaluate the characters as belonging to a certain discipleship paradigm.¹⁶⁰ According to Resseguie, the BD represents the ideal POV in contrast with the other disciples who may at times continue to represent the material POV.¹⁶¹ While Resseguie defines discipleship as continuing/abiding in Jesus' words,¹⁶² only occasionally does he link his study to discipleship.¹⁶³ He does not develop the different characteristics of discipleship or the benefits that accompany faithful followers of Jesus, and does not associate his study with the purpose statement of GJohn. Moreover, except for a brief footnote and a general synthesis of the Gospel's teaching on "the Jews" and the world,¹⁶⁴ Resseguie does not consider the historical setting of GJohn in his study. Thus, while Resseguie provides a unique narratological study of the various points of view presented in GJohn, he does not fully explain *why* the reader should adopt the ideal POV of discipleship as depicted by the author of GJohn.

In 2008, Kaczmarek published a brief study on discipleship by examining the terms φιλέω, φίλος, ἀγαπάω, and ἀγάπη. Kaczmarek asserted that the Johannine community strengthened its own membership by adapting and modifying the terminology of the general population to fit the needs of the community. He argued that the above four terms (and μένειν) were relexicalized by the Johannine community to define itself as a subset of the general population and as emerging

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 27–59.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 200.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 201.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 109–68.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 150, 155–63.

¹⁶² Ibid., 149.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 65, 96, 107, 149, 150–55, 168, 198.

¹⁶⁴ See *ibid.*, 127–31, 140 fn. 95.

from the Jewish synagogue.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, he stressed that φιλέω/φίλος is interchangeable with ἀγαπάω/ἀγάπη,¹⁶⁶ functioning according to the classical notion of friendship that connotes unity/equality, inclusivity, and genuine obligation.¹⁶⁷ Kaczmarek then linked the language of love and discipleship with friendship and concluded that “through the character of Jesus, [John] equates discipleship with friendship.”¹⁶⁸ Kaczmarek applied his theory of relexicalization to 21:15–17 and highlighted the interchangeable use of φιλέω and ἀγαπάω, arguing that this passage (and the rest of chapter 21) was redacted in order to demonstrate to the reader that Jesus and Peter spoke the same language and to affirm the testimonies of the BD and Peter as equal.¹⁶⁹ I do not take issue with Kaczmarek’s general thesis of relexicalization, but it seems that equating discipleship with friendship is simplistic since discipleship is also juxtaposed with the imagery of family (e.g., 8:31–44) and with abiding (15:6–10). For further treatment of Kaczmarek’s work, see §4.3.

In 2014, Rainbow published *Johannine Theology* in which he devoted the last four chapters to discipleship, paying special attention to the themes of coming to Christ, abiding in Christ, the Christian community, and the disciples in the world.¹⁷⁰ Rainbow devotes only twelve pages to the benefits of union with Christ—avoidance of condemnation, cleansing from sin, life, resurrection, adoption, freedom, and friendship.¹⁷¹ He views abiding as “the basic mode of Christian existence and

¹⁶⁵ Kaczmarek, *Language*, 11. For a recent evaluation of antilanguage in GJohn as an expression of antisociety, see David A. Lamb, *Text, Context and the Johannine Community: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Johannine Writings*, LNTS 477 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015). Lamb examined the passages that directly address the reader or employ γραφή/γράφω in order to discern the social context of the passages to determine if the author wrote to a specific community. Lamb concluded that there is “little or no *contact* or *affective involvement*” (italics original) that can be observed in John’s writings, which would suggest that the author wrote to a “close-knit community.” He does allow for some evidence of existence of a “loose network of church groups” in 1–3 John that attached themselves around the text of GJohn. Ibid., esp. 145–97, citing 173. Lamb’s study provides a unique rebuttal to the Johannine community hypothesis championed by Martyn, Brown, et al. See chapter 5 for additional evaluation of the Johannine hypothesis. Ibid., esp. 145–205, citing 173, 197.

¹⁶⁶ Kaczmarek, *Language*, 11, 33.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 49.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 47.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 62–73.

¹⁷⁰ Rainbow, *Theology*, 273–420.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 275–86.

discipleship”;¹⁷² and he considers the Christian journey as one that entails abiding, following, working, and obeying Jesus’ command to love.¹⁷³ Regarding the Johannine characters, he views them as representative of faith in Jesus.¹⁷⁴ Rainbow’s work is to be commended for its breadth in covering numerous Johannine themes and for its theological synthesis and engagement with GJohn, Johannine Letters, and Revelation. Despite the breadth of his work, however, Rainbow does not thoroughly develop the benefits of discipleship.

1.8.3 Characterization in GJohn

While my thesis does not focus on the characterization of the disciples, throughout the thesis I discuss certain characters’ responses to Jesus in support of John’s greater aim to promote discipleship to his readers. Thus I review certain key works on Johannine characterization.

In 1968, Martyn pioneered the two-level reading of GJohn, arguing that the community behind the creation of GJohn would have read the Gospel not only as a narration of the actual events that occurred at the time of Jesus, but also as a reflection of their own experience (see chapter 5 for more discussion of the two-level reading theory).¹⁷⁵ In relation to discipleship and the disciples, Martyn’s work prompted the understanding that the characters in GJohn are to be considered as “types of individuals [rather] than as historical persons.”¹⁷⁶

In 1983, Culpepper deviated from the previous historical and theological studies of GJohn and instead applied literary criticism to GJohn in his mirror reading of the Johannine narrative.¹⁷⁷ Culpepper devoted ten pages to the characterization of the disciples in GJohn, concluding that the BD is presented as the paradigmatic

¹⁷² Ibid., 323.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 323–38.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 296–304.

¹⁷⁵ Martyn, *History*. This approach has also been defended by Collins, *These Things*, 49–55.

¹⁷⁶ Collins, *These Things*, 1. See also Edward Lynn Bode, *The First Easter Morning: The Gospel Accounts of the Women’s Visit to the Tomb of Jesus*, *Analecta Biblica* 45 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), 75; Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2003), 33–77.

¹⁷⁷ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 1–11.

disciple.¹⁷⁸ Culpepper understood John's polarization of characters as essential to the plot of GJohn because it is "propelled by conflict between belief and unbelief as responses to Jesus."¹⁷⁹ Culpepper's interpretation of John's portrayal of the disciples has been designated as a flat reading of the text¹⁸⁰ since he posited that "All situations are reduced to two clear-cut alternatives, and all the characters eventually make their choice."¹⁸¹ Moreover, the flat reading of Johannine characters has been critiqued since not every character demonstrates a clear response to Jesus (e.g., Nicodemus).¹⁸² A study of the disciples indicates that it is difficult to force each personality into a single category; they seem to reflect a complex range of responses and emotions to Jesus' persona.¹⁸³ Furthermore, Culpepper's brief study of the Johannine characters does not adequately engage the relationship between these characters and the benefits of discipleship.¹⁸⁴

In 1997, Beck¹⁸⁵ argued that John presents the anonymous characters as paradigms of discipleship. According to Beck, John presents his case by observing their active faith, which is not based on a sign performed by Jesus, and by highlighting their witness to Jesus.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, Beck asserts that the "Fourth Gospel uses anonymous characters to involve readers in its narrative world and to shape their responses"¹⁸⁷ because the absence of a name enhances a reader's potential to identify with the character.¹⁸⁸ The chief of these model characters is the BD.¹⁸⁹ Beck contrasts the unnamed characters with the named characters, concluding that John does not present the named individuals as model disciples for a variety of

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 115–25, esp. 121, 123.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 97.

¹⁸⁰ Hylen, *Imperfect*, 1.

¹⁸¹ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 104.

¹⁸² See Conway, "Speaking," 328; Hylen, *Imperfect*.

¹⁸³ Bennema makes this observation in Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 202–13.

¹⁸⁴ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 105.

¹⁸⁵ David R. Beck, *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel*, BIS 27 (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 1–2, 137–42.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 12.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 1, 5.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 46, 108–36, 137, 139, citing 136.

reasons, ranging from lack of evidence of their witness to lack of a faith confession on their part.¹⁹⁰

My concerns with Beck's argument are threefold. First, Beck's preference for the unnamed characters as model disciples leads him to questionable conclusions about certain individuals. For example, he concludes that John the Baptist is not a model of discipleship, whereas John portrays John the Baptist as fulfilling the mission of bearing witness to Jesus (1:6–9, 20–36; 3:27–30; 5:33–36; 10:41),¹⁹¹ something that the disciples are to fulfill (15:27). Likewise, he advances a positive interpretation of the lame man (5:1–18),¹⁹² but in doing so, Beck overlooks John's final comment about the persecution by "the Jews" and the attempted murder of Jesus on account of the lame man's testimony (5:16–18).

My second concern with Beck's study is his binary criteria for paradigmatic faith—active faith without dependence on a "sign" *and* witnessing to Jesus—and his inconsistent application of his own criteria.¹⁹³ Such a division is not representative of all of the *unnamed* characters that Beck identifies as models. In line with his criteria, Beck presents the mother of Jesus, the Samaritan woman, the official at Capernaum, the lame man, the blind man, the adulteress, and the BD as paradigms of discipleship;¹⁹⁴ at the same time, Beck rejects John the Baptist, Nicodemus, Peter, Thomas and others as model disciples.¹⁹⁵ However, a closer look at GJohn reveals that several of Beck's suggested paradigmatic disciples do not qualify under Beck's own criteria. For example, Jesus' mother is presented in the narrative of the first sign (2:1–11), thus a sign is appended to her support of Jesus. In addition, the Samaritan woman demonstrates faith in and witnesses to Jesus only after experiencing Jesus' supernatural knowledge of her personal life (4:29). On the other hand, the adulteress (7:53–8:11) does not have a faith expression and does not witness to Jesus, and the entire pericope is unlikely to have been a part of the original text,¹⁹⁶ and while Beck

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 137–42.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 40–43.

¹⁹² Ibid., 86–91. For additional comments on the lame man, see footnote 978.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 137.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 51–107.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 133–36, 138–42.

¹⁹⁶ Metzger, *Commentary*, 187–89.

admits to these objections he still classifies the adulteress as a paradigm disciple.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, elimination of Nathaniel, Peter, Martha, and Thomas as model disciples seems to be a result of a curious reading of the text since John features their explicit christological confessions (1:49; 6:68–69; 11:27; 20:28), which Beck enigmatically rejects as expressions of true discipleship.¹⁹⁸ The confession of Jesus’ sonship is a criterion for true faith and its importance is demonstrated by its inclusion in the Gospel’s purpose statement (20:30–31).¹⁹⁹

Third, while Beck observes certain indicators of discipleship throughout his analysis of the characters (e.g., following, active faith, witnessing),²⁰⁰ he does not develop these characteristics beyond simple mention of each trait. Thorough analysis of these expressions of discipleship would have buttressed his argument regarding the nature of paradigmatic faith. In sum, Beck’s work is not a study of discipleship per se, but an investigation into the different responses to Jesus by named and unnamed individuals, with the latter being presented as model disciples. While Beck attempts to demonstrate how anonymous characters in GJohn can facilitate a reader’s identification with a positive character and propel her toward participation in the same discipleship paradigm,²⁰¹ Beck’s study lacks consistency in application of his criteria. It thus fails to demonstrate how John portrays the unnamed characters as paradigmatic disciples in contrast with the named characters.

In 2010, Farely²⁰² approached the question of the disciples’ faith and understanding in GJohn from a narratological perspective. He investigated how John presents faith and understanding rhetorically, especially as this relates to five characters before and after the resurrection.²⁰³ Farely selected Peter, Judas, Thomas, BD, and Mary Magdalene,²⁰⁴ who appear before and after the resurrection and

¹⁹⁷ Beck, *Discipleship*, 101–7, 140.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 139–40.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 45, 137.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 16, 46.

²⁰² Farely, *Disciples*.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁰⁴ Farely places Mary Magdalene within the broader group of “disciples” and thus he presumes she follows Jesus before and after the resurrection. *Ibid.*, 10–12, 89–161.

throughout GJohn, and whose faith and understanding can therefore be traced.²⁰⁵ Farely argued that the disciples come to *full* faith and understanding only after the resurrection.²⁰⁶ He concluded that John features the positive and negative traits of these five disciples in order to invite the reader into the narrative and to identify with the disciples.²⁰⁷ Thus, rather than viewing the disciples as representative figures, Farely suggested that they are presented in GJohn with diverse traits so that the reader can empathize and sympathize with them as well as express antipathy toward the disciples, in view of their response to Jesus. The ultimate goal of such characterization is to encourage the implied readers to examine themselves as Jesus' disciples so they would become effective witnesses.²⁰⁸

While Farely's study is not about discipleship per se, he still identifies certain characteristics of discipleship, such as, hearing, coming and seeing,²⁰⁹ following,²¹⁰ witnessing,²¹¹ continued allegiance to Jesus' teaching,²¹² and abiding²¹³ with Jesus. However, Farely does not expand on these characteristics and does not sufficiently develop the christological basis of discipleship. Farely's study discusses the work of Jesus rather than Jesus' identity in relation to the development of the disciples' faith and understanding as they are prepared to continue Jesus' mission.²¹⁴ In sum, although Farely's work is a helpful study of the faith and understanding of Jesus' disciples, it is limited in scope as he focuses on only five characters. He also does not consider the other aspects of discipleship as presented in GJohn, such as how other characters portray faith, understanding, and discipleship. Finally, Farely does not address the benefits John features alongside the disciples.

In addition to the above works, there are also other authors who have recently investigated characterization in GJohn. In 2009, Hylen critiqued the traditional flat

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 10–12.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 37.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 192.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 190–95, 206.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 27.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 27, 52.

²¹¹ Ibid., 27.

²¹² Ibid., 52.

²¹³ Ibid., 65–66.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 168–84.

reading of the Johannine characters²¹⁵ that is rooted in the either/or reading of the disciples and she suggested that John portrays the characters as round, dynamic, with ambiguity in their belief.²¹⁶ Hylen proposed that “belief is a process or spectrum rather than an all-or-nothing affair. Belief mingles with disbelief and misunderstanding through the Gospel....The characterization of Jesus reinforces the notion that life is an ongoing process for the disciple.”²¹⁷ Bennema approached GJohn through historical narrative criticism as he classified each character who interacts with Jesus on a continuum²¹⁸ based on their responses to Jesus; he presents each response as a type rather than the character as a type.²¹⁹ Bennema explains the ambiguity in the characters’ responses to Jesus by affirming two perspectives—human and divine. From the divine perspective, a negative response or rejection of Jesus places the character into the category of darkness, while an ambiguous, gradual, or positive response, even if haphazard, classifies him/her into the arena of light.²²⁰ In 2013, Hunt, Tolmie, and Zimmermann edited a work that evaluated nearly seventy characters or groups of characters in GJohn. This composite work consists of short chapters on each character but falls short as it does not provide depth of analysis of each character’s manifestation of discipleship.²²¹ Other works specifically focus on the characterization of women in GJohn.²²² Although characterization in GJohn is outside the scope of this thesis, I engage with the above works when I discuss Johannine characters as examples of discipleship.

1.8.4 Summary

The above survey of research indicates that scholars have investigated the question of *what* discipleship is from historical, theological, and narratological perspectives; however, few have engaged the question of *why* an individual should follow Jesus.

²¹⁵ Culpepper illustrates the flat reading approach. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 104.

²¹⁶ Hylen, *Imperfect*, 15. Similarly, Conway, “Speaking,” 324–41.

²¹⁷ Hylen, *Imperfect*, 157.

²¹⁸ Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 202–11. Similarly, Burnett, “Characterization,” 3–28; Conway, “Speaking,” 340.

²¹⁹ Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 14.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 210–11.

²²¹ Hunt et al., eds., *Character Studies*.

Scholars have examined the Johannine terminology devoted to discipleship, the characteristics of discipleship, the relational imagery of discipleship, the Johannine characterization of the disciples, and they evaluated theological aspects of discipleship such as Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, and ecclesiology. It is my contention that the benefits of discipleship have not been adequately addressed in scholarship, hence the need for the current study. It is my aim to contribute to the scholarly discussion on Johannine discipleship by drawing attention to certain Johannine themes that can be classified as compensatory benefits of continuous discipleship.

1.9 Chapter Summaries

In chapter two, I examine membership in the divine family as the first benefit. I argue that followers of Jesus are integrated into the family of God by divine initiation. The believer is then granted ζωή that enables him to relate to God, Jesus, and other members within the divine family, and to experience corollary benefits that enhance the disciple's participation in the divine family.

In chapter three, I argue that the benefit of the Father and the Son abiding in the believer through the Spirit has a present (14:15–24) and a future dimension (14:2–3). Additionally, I point out that in 15:1–11, John features abiding in Jesus as a condition that a disciple must fulfill which results in additional corollary benefits that are extended to the faithful believer in Jesus.

In chapter four, I argue that John depicts Jesus as a royal figure who invites his followers into a royal friendship (15:12–17). There are three reasons why royal friendship is a viable description of Johannine friendship. First, classical Greek, Roman, and Hellenistic writings provide a literary context in which φίλος bears political overtones. Second, John presents Jesus as a king throughout the Gospel which makes it plausible to understand friendship between Jesus and the disciples as royal friendship. Third, the exegesis and context of 15:12–17 supports the royal

²²² Beirne, *Women and Men*; Martin Scott, *Sophia and the Johannine Jesus*, JSNTSup 71 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), 174–240.

friendship interpretation. Friendship with Jesus yields additional corollary benefits that I derive from the context of 15:12–17.

In chapter five I review the dominant proposals for the historical background to GJohn. I then suggest that it is plausible to understand John as extending certain compensatory benefits to continuous believers in Jesus against the general backdrop of conflict between the Jewish authorities and Jewish believers in Jesus. Within GJohn this tension is manifested in the rhetoric of hostility (i.e., fear of “the Jews”), the references to expulsion from the synagogues, and the hatred from the world.

The sixth chapter synthesizes my findings.

CHAPTER 2: BENEFIT 1—MEMBERSHIP IN THE DIVINE FAMILY

ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι.

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the first primary benefit of discipleship—membership in the divine family. I address three aspects of being a member of the divine family. First, I argue that followers of Jesus are integrated into the family of God by divine initiation through new birth. Second, I show that as Jesus derives his life from the Father, the believer is granted ζωή as a corollary to becoming a member of the divine family. That is, the act of making the believer part of God’s family automatically involves life, just as begetting does. This life enables the believer to relate to God, Jesus, and other members within the divine family. Third, in the surrounding context of the themes of family and life, John presents other corollary benefits that are derived from the possession of life within the divine family, thus these corollary benefits are treated in this chapter. These benefits are love, knowledge of God and of the truth, freedom from sin, walking in the light, salvation, avoidance of judgment/destruction, resurrection, protection, performance of great works, affirmation of genuine discipleship, honor, glory, and unity/oneness of the Father and the Son with the other disciples. I propose that in light of the repeated statements concerning opposition to following Jesus (see chapter 5), it is plausible to view these concepts as compensatory benefits of continuous discipleship.

The family motif in GJohn has been identified by Van der Watt as the most prominent metaphor in GJohn.²²³ Although the expression “divine family”²²⁴ does not appear in GJohn, the Gospel is permeated with kinship terminology, including but not limited to: father, son, children, orphans, brothers, “his own,” and little children. Moreover, God is presented as a Father who procreates, provides, protects,

²²³ Even though Van der Watt elevates the family metaphor above all others in GJohn, he admits that “the scope of the relations within the God-man sphere is broader than the scope of a single metaphor.” Van der Watt, *Family*, 161, 397, citing 305.

²²⁴ Campbell uses the designation “fictive family.” Joan C. Campbell, *Kinship Relations in the Gospel of John*, CBQMS 42 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2007), 4–5.

and loves those in relationship with him through his Son. Consequently, it is reasonable to speak of the divine family as consisting of God, his Son, and the believers as children of God.

John emphasizes the divine family motif in three ways. First, John frames the entire Gospel with the inclusio that features filial terminology—in the prologue (1:12–13) and in the concluding chapters of GJohn (20:17; 21:5). In the prologue, John presents the Logos as coming into the world and those who had received the Logos were given the authority²²⁵ to join the divine family (1:12–13). In 20:17, Jesus’ disciples are designated as Jesus’ brothers; and in 21:5, Jesus is portrayed as addressing his disciples as children. Additionally, family imagery forms an inclusio in the public ministry of Jesus narrated in John 1–12 since 1:12 and 12:36 contain promises of amalgamation into the divine family.

Second, as noted in chapter one, the significance of the family theme is evident in the chiasmic structure of the prologue with the focal point contained in verse 12b, “he gave them authority to become children of God.”²²⁶ A reading of 1:12–13 through the lens of the chiasm suggests that the incorporation of the believers into the divine family is the central purpose of the coming of the light and the incarnation of the Logos. Thus, the strategic placement of filial terminology that forms the above inclusios in GJohn and the chiasm in the prologue accentuates and distinguishes the family from other images in GJohn.

Third, John spotlights the divine family motif through the frequent references to the Father-Son relationship between God and Jesus. God is referenced as Father 120 times in GJohn,²²⁷ more frequently than in the SG combined (58 times). Eighty percent of the references to the Father in GJohn concern Jesus’ relationship with the

²²⁵ Keener defines authority as the “divine authorization to become what no human effort could accomplish.” The term ἐξουσία consistently means authorization in John and in every occurrence is appended to Jesus’ mission to offer life (1:12; 5:27; 10:18; 17:2; 19:10–11). Additionally, Van der Watt is right to conclude that this is another example of the imagery of new life and it allows the believer to be and act in a certain way because of the new life. In the discussion of ζωή below, I define authority in reference to ability. Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 403; Van der Watt, *Family*, 185; Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 149–52.

²²⁶ See §1.5 for sources and additional discussion.

²²⁷ Nearly half of the references (52 times) are in the FD, which stresses the relational intimacy between the Father and the Son in the private exchanges between Jesus and his closest followers.

Father,²²⁸ as illustrated by Jesus' appellation of God as "my Father" (25 times).²²⁹ To distinguish Jesus' relationship with the Father, John reserves the term "son" (υἱός) solely for Jesus²³⁰ whereas he calls the believers "children" (τέκνα 1:12–13; 11:52),²³¹ "little children" (τεκνία 13:33; παιδία, 21:5), and "brothers" (ἀδελφοί, 20:17).²³² Moreover, the believers are not called children of the *Father* or born of the *Father*, but rather children of God and born of God (1:12–13; 11:52).²³³ Thompson states, "There are many 'children' of God, there is only *one* Son" (italics original).²³⁴

Regarding the thesis argument, John deploys the promise of membership in the divine family in conjunction with discipleship terminology to encourage devotion to Jesus. In 1:12–13 and 12:36 John links the language of family to belief in Jesus/light, in 1:12–13 inclusion in God's family is linked with receiving Jesus, and in 20:17 and 21:5 family imagery is coupled with the disciples of Jesus. From the outset, John's discussion of the believer's integration into the divine family entails the individual receiving Jesus (λαμβάνω) and believing in Jesus (πιστεύω) (1:11–13).²³⁵ Haenchen points out that the expressions "his own did not receive him" (οὐ παρέλαβον) in 1:11 and "whoever received him" (ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν) in 1:12 are

²²⁸ D. F. Tolmie, "The Characterization of God in the Fourth Gospel," *JSNT* 69 (1998): 64. The following persons are also called father in GJohn: Jacob (4:12), the forefathers (4:20; 6:31, 49, 58; 7:22), the official in Capernaum (4:52), Joseph (6:42), Abraham (8:39, 53, 56), and the devil (8:38, 41, 44).

²²⁹ The references are distributed throughout John 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 14, 15, 20.

²³⁰ Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 45.

²³¹ Marianne Meye Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 70. Stevens suggests that τέκνον stresses intimacy over legal status of the disciples as children of God. George Barker Stevens, *The Johannine Theology: A Study of the Doctrinal Contents of the Gospels and Epistles of the Apostle John* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1894), 253. The appellation, τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ, most likely came from the OT concept of "the righteous" being God's children (Gen 6:2; Ps 29:1) and Israel being called "God's son" (Exod 4:22; Deut 32:6; Jer 31:9, 20; Isa 64:8). The righteous are called sons of God in Wis 2:13, 16, 18; 5:5. Keener, *John*, 400–1.

²³² Bultmann sees this single reference to the disciples as ἀδελφοί as a technical designation for members of the Christian community. Bultmann, *John*, 716 fn. 1.

²³³ Thompson, *God*, 58.

²³⁴ Ibid., 70. Cf., P. W. von Martitz, E. Schweizer, E. Lohse, et al., "υἱός, υἱοθεσία," *TDNT*, 8:366.

²³⁵ The verb πιστεύω is used 98 times and the adjectives πιστός and ἄπιστος appear in 20:27. Additionally, receiving Jesus/his words appears in the following passages: 1:11–12; 3:11, 32–33; 5:43; 12:48; 13:20; 17:8. Full treatment of the soteriological concepts are outside the scope of this thesis. For discussion of the themes involved in the process of becoming and remaining a disciple (e.g., seeing, hearing), see Bennema, *Power*, 110–59.

strategically employed in GJohn to contrast faith and the lack of faith.²³⁶ Throughout his narrative, John presents belief as assent and allegiance to Jesus.²³⁷ In the first Johannine reference to the divine family in 1:12–13, the present participle τοῖς πιστεύουσιν is used to indicate that continuous belief in Jesus’ name is characteristic of a child of God.²³⁸ Farely rightly observes that the references to receiving and not receiving Jesus in 1:11–13 are to encourage the implied reader “to read the rest of the narrative with these two opposite responses in mind.”²³⁹ As John develops the motif of the divine family, he continues to link it with πιστεύειν (e.g., 3:3–21; 8:20–59) and λαμβάνειν (e.g., 3:11; 17:8). It is to the individual who receives Jesus and believes in him that God extends the benefit of membership in the divine family.

2.2 The Benefits of Membership in the Divine Family

In this section I discuss John’s portrayal of membership in the divine family and how John presents this theme as a benefit to promote continuous commitment to Jesus. First, membership is by divine initiative and thus it is an exclusive privilege of the believer. Second, membership involves possession of eternal life which is the disciples’ participation in the life of God and the ability and quality of the disciples’ reciprocal relationships in the divine family. Third, John presents other corollary benefits that are derived from participation in the divine family and thus these corollary benefits (listed above) are treated within this chapter. John features the family benefit in proximity to the call to believe in Jesus, receive Jesus, and walk with Jesus and thus I suggest that the promise of membership in the divine family encourages discipleship.

²³⁶ Ernst Haenchen, Robert Walter Funk, and Ulrich Busse, *John: A Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 2 vols., Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 1:118.

²³⁷ Barrett, *John*, 164. Of the 98 references to πιστεύω, 93 have Jesus as the direct object, in contrast with the seven uses of belief in Jesus in the SG (Matt 18:6=Mark 9:42; Matt 27:42=Mark 15:32; Mark 1:15; Luke 8:12–13; 22:67). For Jesus as the object of faith, see Sigurd Grindheim, “Faith in Jesus: The Historical Jesus and the Object of Faith,” *Bib* 97 no. 1 (2016): 79–100.

²³⁸ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 620–21.

²³⁹ Farely, *Disciples*, 19.

The benefit of belonging to the *right* family was chiefly important in the ancient Mediterranean.²⁴⁰ Kinship relations dominated social relationships in the ancient Mediterranean milieu. Malina notes, “The focal institution of the various societies [in the Mediterranean] has been and is kinship. The family is truly everything.”²⁴¹ Van der Watt remarks on the importance of the family for daily life when he writes that the family was the primary social order and was “part and parcel of the everyday life of every person in the ancient Mediterranean world.”²⁴² It is understandable then that an individual’s identity and success in society depended on belonging to the right family,²⁴³ which led to the prioritization of the group over the individual. Hellerman observes: “for the people in the world of the New Testament, the welfare of the groups to which they belonged took priority over their own individual happiness and relational satisfaction.”²⁴⁴ This accent on group and on the priority of the family over individualism began at birth. Van der Watt stresses the emphasis on birth as the central event in a person’s life determining his or her future societal success. He observes, “In ancient families birth was a defining social event, since it determined the family (Gr.=oikos) a person belonged to and therefore also his social stratification.”²⁴⁵ Because of the importance of the family to the ancient reader we can suppose that John’s promise of the disciple’s amalgamation into the divine family would be perceived as a privilege. Moreover, coupling this benefit with the theme of belief in Jesus suggests that John deploys this image to persuade his readers to commit to Jesus (1:12–13).

²⁴⁰ I agree with Van der Watt that due to the breadth of family practices in the Ancient Near East, the best point of departure is John’s allusions to familial terminology; thus, I will treat familial practices that intersect with GJohn. Van der Watt, *Family*, 161–65.

²⁴¹ Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 29.

²⁴² Van der Watt, *Family*, 400.

²⁴³ Malina, *New Testament World*, 29.

²⁴⁴ Joseph H., *The Ancient Church as Family* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001), 14–15. Hellerman observes Mediterranean family dynamics that form the background to the early Christian self-understanding of being a part of God’s family.

²⁴⁵ J. G. Van der Watt, *An Introduction to the Johannine Gospel and Letters*, T & T Clark Approaches to Biblical Studies (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 55.

2.2.1 Birth from Above: Membership is by Divine Initiative

The Johannine thematization of membership in the divine family begins with God the Father initiating a relationship with the believer in Jesus. John develops God's role as the proactive agent in bringing disciples into his family through the verbs *γίνομαι*, *γεννάω*, *δίδωμι*, *ἔλκω*, and the expression *ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ*.²⁴⁶ Analysis of these terms in their context elucidates how becoming a member of the divine family is a benefit that is initiated by God.

2.2.1.1 *γίνομαι* and *γεννάω*

John uses two clauses in 1:12–13 to describe God's integration of the believer into the divine family: *τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι* and *ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν*. The verb *γίνομαι* appears 83 times in GJohn, but it carries a symbolic meaning related to discipleship only in 1:12; 8:33; 9:27, 39; 10:16; 12:36. I do not examine *γίνομαι* in 9:39 because it appears in passing and its usage does not substantially develop the theme of discipleship. In 10:16, *γίνομαι* is appended to *ζωή* and in 12:36 the verb is attached to *light*, and both of these passages are treated in subsections below. John's second verb to describe the integration of the believer into the divine family is *γεννάω*, which appears 18 times in six separate passages (1:13; 3:3–8; 8:41; 9:2–34; 16:21; 18:37²⁴⁷), but the symbolic meaning in reference to following Jesus is only contained in 1:13 and 3:3–8, which is examined below.

The first use of *γίνομαι* in reference to the believer becoming a child of God is in 1:12 where the aorist infinitive form, *γενέσθαι*, can be understood dynamically/progressively or statically. Vellanickal defends the dynamic position.²⁴⁸ First, he bifurcates verses 12 and 13 in order to separate *τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι* from *ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν* and instead he reads verse 13 in conjunction with 14. Moreover, he

²⁴⁶ The variations *ἀπὸ θεοῦ*, *παρὰ πατρός*, *ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ*, *ἄνωθεν*, and *ἐκ ἄνω* all convey the meaning of being sourced in God.

²⁴⁷ John 18:37 contains Jesus' reply to Pilate, affirming that he is a king and that he was born (*γεγέννημαι*) to testify to the truth. The same root (*γεννάω*) refers to the incarnation of the Logos in 1:14 and the begetting of the Son of God (1:18; 3:16, 18).

²⁴⁸ For a historical overview of the debate regarding the dynamic versus static interpretations of "becoming a child of God," see Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 105–12.

prefers the singular reading of ἐγεννήθη²⁴⁹ to the plural ἐγεννήθησαν in 1:13 which allows him to view verses 13 and 14 as a reference to the begetting of the Logos instead of the believers as children of God.²⁵⁰ However, textual evidence for ἐγεννήθησαν²⁵¹ in verse 13 and the teaching of the Johannine corpus²⁵² undermine Vellanickal's argument since both affirm the plural reading ἐγεννήθησαν and thus invalidate Vellanickal's proposed division between verses 12 and 13. Second, Vellanickal points to the aorist infinitive γενέσθαι in 1:12, suggesting that it should be viewed progressively in light of the other three uses of γενέσθαι in GJohn (5:6; 8:58; 9:27).²⁵³ This then for him suggests the dynamic/progressive notion of becoming a child of God. However, in 5:6–9 the lame man becomes immediately healed instead of entering a healing process (note εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιής in 5:9). In 8:58, the reference to Abraham is better understood as his *moment* of birth (πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι).²⁵⁴ In 9:27, the blind man's retort to the Jewish authorities—"Do you also want to become (γενέσθαι) his disciples?"—should be understood in light of

²⁴⁹ In support of the singular reading ἐγεννήθη Vellanickal points to the Latin Codex Veronensis from the fifth century, the Syriac versions Curetonianus (sy^c) and Sinaiticus (sy^s) dated by Kurt and Aland to the fourth century, the apocryphal Epistula XI Apostolorum found in Coptic and Ethiopic which Schneemelcher traces to the Greek original from the second century, and to Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Sulpice Severius. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 190; Wilhelm Schneemelcher and R. McL. Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, Revised ed., 2 vols. (Cambridge; Louisville, KY: J. Clarke & Co.; Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 1:251; Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 114–15.

²⁵⁰ Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 112–32.

²⁵¹ There is not a single Greek mss supporting the textual variant of ἐγεννήθησαν as a singular (ἐγεννήθη) in reference to Jesus, chiefly Latin mss have the singular reading. All of the Greek mss as well as patristic witnesses overwhelmingly support the plural reading of ἐγεννήθησαν, which refers to believers. Brown notes that there is a tendency of ancient texts to become more Christological not less, which would warrant a later change to the singular, instead of the singular being the original reading. Barrett, *John*, 164; Brown, *John*, 11–12; Ford, *Redeemer-Friend*, 120; Murray J. Harris, *John*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Andreas J. Köstenberger, EGGNT (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2015), 32; Maarten J. J. Menken, "'Born of God' or 'Begotten by God'? A Translation Problem in the Johannine Writings," in *Studies in John's Gospel and Epistles: Collected Essays* (Leuven: Peeters, 2015), 14 fn. 4; Metzger, *Commentary*, 168–69; Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman world: Divine Sonship in its Social and Political Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 140–5; Van der Watt, *Family*, 179 fn. 88.

²⁵² Brown notes that in all of Johannine literature, the followers of Jesus, instead of Jesus, are described as begotten of God. Brown, *John*, 12. See also John 3:3–8; 1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1–4, 18.

²⁵³ Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 140–41.

²⁵⁴ Barrett, *John*, 352.

the response of “the Jews” to the blind man in 9:28, “You are (ἐῖ) his disciple, we are (ἐσμὲν) disciples of Moses.” From this passage I suggest that John depicts “the Jews” as having made a decision against Jesus and as not wishing to be Jesus’ disciples. Thus, it is plausible to understand γενέσθαι statically rather than dynamically in all three passages. I contend that Vellanickal’s defense of the dynamic view of γενέσθαι in 1:12 with reliance on γενέσθαι in 5:6; 8:58; 9:27 and with reliance on the weakly attested singular ἐγεννήθη is inadequate in contrast with the evidence for the plural reading ἐγεννήθησαν in all of the Greek manuscripts. Thus, I favor the static view which understands τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι (v. 12) and ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν (v. 13) as depicting a simple event of God’s begetting of the believer which also makes the believer a child of God.²⁵⁵

Instead of viewing the aorist infinitive γενέσθαι dynamically/progressively, I suggest that it be viewed as having an ingressive force. This then would indicate a change of condition and entrance into a new state of perpetual status of being a child of God (1:12).²⁵⁶ John seems to present spiritual birth as a simple event after which the child is kept in the relationship with the Father through faith in Jesus. Thus, verse 12 is not describing a “process of becoming a child” that can be likened to a nine-month pregnancy period at the end of which a child is born; instead, the grammar supports the believer’s integration into the divine family as a simple act (note the aorists and the perfect passives of γεννάω in 1:13; 3:3–8).²⁵⁷ The change in the tense of the verb, from the aorist “who received” (ἐλάβον, 1:12) to the present participle “those who believe” (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν, 1:12), stresses the need for a continual commitment to Jesus.²⁵⁸ In the rest of the Gospel, John stresses both aspects of the relationship between the Father and the children of God, that is, the Father’s ongoing

²⁵⁵ See Vellanickal’s explanation of the static view which he rejects. Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 110.

²⁵⁶ BDAG, s.v. “γίνομαι,” 159. Smyth indicates that when an aorist whose present tense meaning denotes continued action, the aorist should be seen as ingressive. Thus, 1:12 suggests an entrance and continuation in the condition of believers being children of God. Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), §1924.

²⁵⁷ Surprisingly Vellanickal sees a process in 1:12–13 but a simple act in 3:3–8 which begins the point of spiritual birth that commences a new relationship of the believer as a child of God. Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 139–52, 169–70, 353.

²⁵⁸ Harris, *John*, 31.

commitment to his children (e.g., 6:39–40; 10:28–29; 17:24–26) and the children’s continual devotion to the Father (e.g., 8:31–32; 12:35–36; 15:1–17). Thus, in 1:12, John describes the role of belief in obtaining the child of God status, and in 1:13, John clarifies that the believer became a child of God because she has been begotten by God.

Van der Watt has also defended the dynamic interpretation of γίνομαι in 1:12 by appealing to its use in verse 14 where the Logos becomes flesh (σὰρξ ἐγένετο) and continues to function progressively in the world.²⁵⁹ Yet I suggest that a more fitting parallel is the birth analogy in 1:13 and in 3:3–8 through the verb γεννάω.²⁶⁰ In every instance in GJohn, γεννάω is in the passive voice, thus stressing the role of the subject rather than that of the object (e.g., 1:13; 3:3–8; 8:41; 9:2, 19, 20, 32, 34; 16:21; 18:37). Moreover, in 3:3–8, the emphasis on the Spirit’s proactive work in the new birth is observable in the Spirit blowing where it wishes, suggesting that the Spirit cannot be controlled by the object. This is affirmed in 6:63 where we read, “the Spirit is the life-giver, the flesh benefits nothing.” John’s message in 1:13 is that a believer becomes God’s child not because of physiology,²⁶¹ or human desire or will,

²⁵⁹ Van der Watt, *Family*, 186. McKeever sees the process of the Logos becoming flesh parallel to the divine birth of the believers. McKeever, “Born of God,” 121–38.

²⁶⁰ The verb γεννάω can mean “to be born” or “to be begotten” of God. Although most translators prefer the former, the majority of the commentators defend the latter. Barrett, *John*, 206; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 45; Bennema, *Power*, 169 fn. 33; Brown, *John*, 12, 130; Bultmann, *John*, 136 fn. 4; John McHugh, *John 1–4*, ICC (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 46. However, Weissenrieder defends “to be born” because of the embryonic vocabulary in the text of John 3. Annette Weissenrieder, “Spirit and Rebirth in the Gospel of John,” *RT* 21 (2014): 77. Moloney prefers “to be born,” while Schnackenburg remains agnostic. Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, SP 4 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 98; Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:368–69. Menken prefers “to be begotten by God” over “born of God” because it allows for both male and female begetting, while “born” stresses the female role. Menken examined the first century CE Hellenistic texts from a wide geographic area, GJohn passages, and the rest of the Johannine literature to conclude that “begotten” is contextually and exegetically preferred for John 1:13. Menken concludes that the translation “begotten” ascribes to God the “metaphorical male sexual role: he is compared to a father who begets children which highlights God as the initiator of the new life of the believer.” God as the giver of life is observable in John 5:21, 26. Menken, “Born of God,” 13–28, esp. 27–28.

²⁶¹ John’s rejection of “blood,” “the will of man,” and “the will of the flesh” as the means of entrance into the divine family was to stress the role of God in the process. Sjef Van Tilborg, *Imaginative Love in John*, BIS 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 33–57. Resseguie observes that the juxtaposition of the physical point of view (POV) with the spiritual POV reveals the conflict of the two POV, with the physical POV hindering the reader to adopt the spiritual POV. Resseguie, *Strange*, 114.

but because the believer is “begotten by God” (ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν). In the end, the benefit of becoming a member of the divine family is initiated by God.

In 3:3–8, *γεννάω* is the preferred Johannine term to describe entrance *into* the kingdom of God by divine initiative. The requirement to see the kingdom of God/enter the kingdom of God²⁶² is birth from above (γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν, 3:3, 7) or birth through water and the spirit (γεννηθῆναι ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος, 3:5, 6, 8).²⁶³ Jesus’ response to Nicodemus’ misunderstanding²⁶⁴ indicates that Jesus expected “the teacher”²⁶⁵ in Israel to understand his reference to the water and spirit, which suggests that an OT background is most appropriate for this passage.²⁶⁶ The allusion

²⁶² I disagree with Trumbower who develops two stages in new birth—seeing and entering—the former requiring birth from above, whereas participation in the second stage requires birth from water and spirit. John employs the verbs “enter” (e.g., 10:9) and “see” (e.g., 1:39, 46; 19:37; 20:8) interchangeably to refer to believing in Jesus and committing to him. Additionally, most scholars view seeing and entering as synonymous. Barrett, *John*, 207; Brown, *John*, 130; Bultmann, *John*, 135 fn. 2; Jeffrey A. Trumbower, *Born from Above: The Anthropology of the Gospel of John*, HUT 29 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992), 74; Vellanicall, *Sonship*, 207. Cf. McHugh, *John 1–4*, 227; Westcott, *John*, 50.

²⁶³ The adverb ἄνωθεν appears in 3:3, 7, 31; 19:11 and since it is a clear reference to heaven in 3:31 and in 19:31 and 3:11–12 indicate that Jesus is speaking of heavenly things, ἄνωθεν should be understood as birth from above which is equated to birth from water and spirit. Van der Watt, *Family*, 172 fn. 50; Vellanicall, *Sonship*, 172–74. Bultmann sees “from God” and “from above” as synonymous. Bultmann, *John*, 136 fn. 4. Cf. Resseguie who sees two meanings of ἄνωθεν, “from above” and “again” as necessary because the “double entendre foregrounds the spiritual act of rebirth against the background of physical birth.” Resseguie, *Strange*, 52–53, 122–23.

²⁶⁴ Menken observes that Nicodemus demonstrates his misunderstanding in that he omits Jesus’ twice used ἄνωθεν (3:3, 7) when Nicodemus responds to Jesus in verse 4, “how is it possible for a man to be born when he is old?” Menken, “Born of God,” 20–21.

²⁶⁵ McHugh calls him “the outstanding teacher.” McHugh, *John 1–4*, 230. Trumbower suggests that Jesus is not extending an invitation to Nicodemus to enter the kingdom because instead of calling Nicodemus by name, he uses the indefinite pronoun τις in 3:3, 5 and the plural personal pronoun ὑμεῖς in 3:7. Trumbower overstates his case with these observations because even Nicodemus is presented as employing the plural οἶδαμεν as a self-referent when addressing Jesus for the first time (3:2). Moreover, the singular pronoun σοι (3:3, 5, 11) and the singular use of οἶδας in reference to Nicodemus (3:8) indicates that Jesus’ offer was to Nicodemus and extends broadly to anyone else who examines Jesus’ signs (2:23–3:2). Trumbower, *Born from Above*, 71, 74.

²⁶⁶ Barrett, *John*, 208; Bennema, *Power*, 170; Carson, *John*, 195; Keener, *John*, 551–53. I am not persuaded by Weissenrieder’s recent attempt to interpret 3:3–8 in reference to physical birth by denoting similarities with Gen 2:7 in the LXX, the ancient medical embryonic terminology of water and breath, and by seeing the breathing of the spirit in 20:22 as an act that reflects membership in the divine family. John 20:22 is best understood as sending language because of the sending motif in 20:21–23 and the parallel to 3:34, which depicts Jesus being infused with the Spirit in the context of the sending motif. Similar to Jesus coming to forgive sins (8:24), the disciples are sent to forgive sins (20:23). Additionally, Jesus calls his disciples “brothers” in 20:17, thus the believer’s integration into the divine family must have occurred prior to 20:22. Moreover, as noted above, Ezek 36:22–32 is a

to water and spirit is likely a reference to Ezek 36:22–32. The cleansing process in Ezek 36 involves the water, spirit and a change of heart (vv. 25–27).²⁶⁷ In John 3:3–8, John features the Spirit as the initiator of the “new birth” process through the consistent use of the passive form of γεννάω. Bennema links Ezek 36:25–27 to John 3:3–8, envisioning the Spirit as the effective cause and sustainer of the new life.²⁶⁸ Bennema writes, “The birth of water-and-Spirit is an *initiation metaphor* for entering into salvation, into the kingdom of God, through the cleansing, purifying and renewing work of the Spirit” (*italics original*).²⁶⁹ Bennema continues, “This saving understanding of God, as a result of the Spirit’s activity, and a subsequent adequate belief-response recreates the person and brings her/him through a ‘birth of the Spirit’ into a life-giving relationship with the Father and Son.”²⁷⁰ While John presents Nicodemus as employing γεννάω in reference to physical birth (twice in 3:4), Jesus is portrayed as relying on the OT as he explains to Nicodemus that “being born as a Jew is not sufficient to qualify for entry into the kingdom of God,”²⁷¹ thus articulating that spiritual birth from above—an act achieved by divine initiative—is necessary for entry into the kingdom of God. The need for spiritual birth arises from the impotency of human flesh (3:6; 6:63).²⁷² Thus, through the verbs γεννάω and γίνομαι, John stresses God’s initiative in inaugurating the believer in Jesus into the divine family because, as Brown states, “sonship is based on divine begetting, not on any claim on man’s part.”²⁷³

closer lexical parallel to John 3:3–8 than ancient medical terminology. Weissenrieder, “Spirit,” 58–85, esp. 77–79.

²⁶⁷ See Bennema for a discussion of the function of water in John 3:3–8. Bennema understands water as the “cleansing/purification and the transforming ‘indwelling’ of God’s Spirit which results in a new creation.” Bennema, *Power*, 172–73. Cf. Vellanickal who sees water as a reference to baptism. Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 179–91.

²⁶⁸ Bennema argues that the Spirit is the regenerative agent who mediates Jesus’ revelation to the believer, which procures eternal life for the believer as he undergoes the new birth by the Spirit. Bennema, *Power*, 168–81. Köstenberger describes the Spirit as a “stream” who causes and sustains life. Van der Watt writes, “Life begins and is continued in the presence and working of the Spirit.” Köstenberger, *Theology*, 342; J. G. Van der Watt, “Everlasting Life in John and the Permanence of Salvation: The Life Metaphor in John’s Gospel,” *TI* 1 (2005–2007): 12.

²⁶⁹ Bennema, *Power*, 180.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 174.

²⁷² John’s dualism of spirit and flesh is similar to Matt 16:17; Rom 8:4; Gal 5:16; 6:8.

²⁷³ Brown, *John*, 11.

2.2.1.2 δίδωμι and ἔλκω

In addition to γίνομαι and γεννάω, John uses δίδωμι to communicate God's initiative in bringing believers into the divine family. In 1:12, δίδωμι describes God's initiative in giving the believers the right to become children of God. In 6:37, God is the first to act²⁷⁴ in the process of the disciples coming to Jesus. John depicts Jesus as claiming, "Everything that the Father gives me will come to me" (6:37; see also 6:39, 44, 65; 17:9, 24). God gives the sheep to Jesus (10:29), Jesus confers eternal life only to those who are given to him by God (17:2), and Jesus manifests God's name (17:6) and prays only for those who have been given to him by God (17:9). Moreover, only those who have been given to Jesus by God will be with Jesus and perceive his glory (17:24). Through John's use of δίδωμι we see John spotlighting God's initiative in giving to the Son the believers who thereafter belong to the Father and to the Son (e.g., 17:6, 9–10).

John's companion term to refer to the Father's initiative is ἔλκω. In GJohn, ἔλκω refers to the Father drawing people to Jesus (6:44), Jesus drawing people to himself (12:32), the disciples drawing a net filled with fish (21:6, 11), and Peter drawing a sword from its sheath to strike Malchus' ear (18:10).²⁷⁵ Jiménez affirms God's initiative in drawing the disciples to Jesus when he writes, "There is no other way to come to Jesus unless the Father calls you."²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:46.

²⁷⁵ The term appears only four additional times in the NT, on three occasions in reference to men being violently dragged (e.g., Acts 16:19; 21:30; Jam 2:6), and once it describes the intensity of inner desires leading an individual to an illicit action (e.g., Jam 1:14). Thus, in the rest of the NT, ἔλκω stresses control and initiative, which is consistent with the Johannine accent on God's proactive choice in bringing new members into the divine family. BDAG notes the element of force in the act of dragging/pulling. BDAG, "ἔλκω," 318. Pace Bultmann who writes, "the Father's 'drawing' does not precede the believer's 'coming' to Jesus—in other words, does not take place before the decision of faith." Since this is not a theological thesis, I will not engage in the question of pre-determinism. However, it seems that John prioritizes the Father's role in the process of salvation. For discussion of pre-determinism in GJohn, see Bennema, *Power*, 132 fn. 100; Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:21–26, citing 23; D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 163–200; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:259–74.

²⁷⁶ Jiménez, "El Discipulo," 291.

2.2.1.3 ἐκ θεοῦ

The expressions θεοῦ/ἐκ θεοῦ/ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (1:13; 7:17; 8:42, 47) also establish an individual as belonging to the divine family.²⁷⁷ Harris points out that ἐκ θεοῦ in GJohn highlights God's initiative in integrating believers into his family. Harris writes:

[W]hen God is identified as the source of some benefit, it is often permissible to infer that he is also the agent in its provision...when spiritual renewal is depicted as God's work, the apostle John frequently employs the metaphor of rebirth or regeneration....[thus] ἐκ θεοῦ may be paraphrased 'as a result of God's initiative and action.'²⁷⁸

John 8:31–59 is the most extensive discussion on the divine family in GJohn,²⁷⁹ and in 8:31–59 the genitive expressions θεοῦ/ἐκ θεοῦ/ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (of God) are used to distinguish between members of God's family and the affiliates of the devil. The theme of family in 8:31–59 is seen in the references to God as Father (vv. 16, 18, 19, 26–27, 28, 38, 40, 41, 42, 47, 49, 54, 55), Abraham as father (vv. 33, 37, 39, 40, 53, 56, 57, 58), the devil as father (vv. 38, 41, 44), children (v. 39), God's household (vv. 35–36), and in the depiction of the two father figures in opposition to one another (vv. 38–44). Due to the prominence of family themes in 8:31–59, my analysis of the family motif and its affiliated benefits will be derived from this text.

In the discussion of the two families in 8:31–59 (and in the surrounding context), John juxtaposes Jesus' call to remain in his word with true discipleship

²⁷⁷ The accent on the divine origin in the expressions θεοῦ/ἐκ θεοῦ/ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ can be likened to other phrases that describe Jesus' divine origin. For example, Jesus is said to be from above (ἄνωθεν or ἐκ ἄνω, 3:31; 8:23), from heaven (ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, e.g., 3:13, 27, 31; 6:31, 32, 33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58), and from the Father/God (ἀπὸ θεοῦ, παρὰ πατρός, ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, e.g., 1:14; 3:2; 6:46; 7:28–29; 8:40, 42; 13:3; 16:27, 28, 30; 17:8). De Jonge correctly maintains that one should not stress the differences in meaning between prepositions ἀπὸ (e.g., 3:2; 13:3; 16:30), ἐκ (e.g., 1:13; 7:17), and παρὰ (e.g., 1:6; 6:46; 8:40; 9:16, 33; 16:27) but instead note the idea these prepositions are conveying—Jesus' origin from God/Father/heaven/above. de Jonge, *Stranger*, 164, fn. 10.

²⁷⁸ Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 105–6.

²⁷⁹ Although the majority of the commentators approach 8:12–59 as single unit, they observe distinct themes in vv. 12–20, 21–30, 31–47, 48–59. Here I will focus on vv. 31–59 as they represent the most focused section on the family theme. I engage 8:12–30 in §2.2.2.2b and §2.2.2.3a. For proposed divisions of this passage, see Barrett, *John*, 333; Carson, *John*, 337; Ridderbos, *John*, 291;

(8:31) and with four benefits that derive from membership in the divine family (8:32–59, see below). John frames this passage (8:31–59) with an invitation to discipleship (8:31) as he spotlights “the Jews” who believed in Jesus (vv. 30–31). Then John concludes this narrative in verse 59 by showing that presumably these same “Jews” attempted to murder Jesus. John depicts Jesus as challenging these supposed Jewish believers toward discipleship by the use of the third class conditional sentence in 8:31, ἐὰν ὑμεῖς μείνητε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ. The aorist subjunctive μείνητε in the protasis can be viewed as a constative aorist which results in the apodosis in the confirmation of an individual as Jesus’ disciple.²⁸⁰ The exhortation to discipleship is also observable in references to belief (8:24, 30, 31, 45, 46),²⁸¹ following Jesus (v. 12),²⁸² true discipleship (v. 31), abiding in Jesus’ teaching (v. 31), hearing Jesus’ and God’s word (v. 43, 46),²⁸³ and obeying Jesus’ word (v. 51–52). In the immediate context, these expressions of discipleship appear alongside four benefits of discipleship that are corollary to participation in the divine family—affirmation of being a true disciple (v. 31b), knowledge of the truth (vv. 31–32), freedom from slavery to sin (vv. 24, 36), and protection from death (vv. 51–52).²⁸⁴ Below I discuss only the first three benefits because protection from death is treated in §2.2.2.2b. I propose that the aforementioned four benefits are experienced within the divine family because of the mention of the household of the Father, the tracing of one’s family lineage, and Jesus’ references to God as the Father. While the ability to know the truth is also discussed in the context of abiding and friendship with Jesus (see chapters 3 and 4), John substantially develops the theme of knowledge in John 8, and thus I integrate it into the benefit of membership in the divine family.

Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:187; D. Moody Jr. Smith, *John*, ANTC (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 178.

²⁸⁰ Harris, *John*, 174.

²⁸¹ The present tense πιστεύετε in vv. 45–46 stresses continual commitment to Jesus’ teaching.

²⁸² The articular present active participle, ὁ ἀκολουθῶν, stresses ongoing commitment.

²⁸³ Note the present tense infinitive in verse 43, ἀκούειν τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐμόν, and the use of ἀκούετε in verse 47 in the present tense, stressing continual commitment to hear God’s and Jesus teaching.

²⁸⁴ Note the use of the third class conditional clause (ἐὰν + subjunctive verb) in each passage to persuade the reader to discipleship.

2.2.1.3a True Discipleship and Knowledge of the Truth

The first two corollary benefits of membership in the divine family are intertwined in 8:31–32: the ability of the disciple to know the truth and the affirmation of being a true disciple. The importance of the concept of truth to Jesus’ mission is declared by Jesus to Pilate in 18:37, “For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” Truth is a distinguishing mark of discipleship. Truth is sourced in God and is equated to Jesus’ words/teaching and God’s words (8:26, 28, 31–32, 38; 12:49–50; 14:10; 17:17). Jesus speaks the truth (1:17; 8:32, 40, 44, 45, 46; 16:7; 18:37) and is the embodiment of truth (14:6).²⁸⁵ The quality of truth is attributed to the light (1:9), the Logos (1:14), God (3:33; 5:32; 7:28; 8:26; 17:3), the Spirit (14:17; 15:26; 16:13), heavenly bread (6:32), Jesus as the true vine (15:1), God’s word (17:17, 19), and to Jesus’ blood and flesh (6:55). Since God is true, he seeks worshippers whose worship is based in the truth (4:23–24). Those who do what is true come to the light (3:21) and these know the truth because they have been set free by it (8:31–32) and are subsequently designated as true disciples (1:47; 8:31; 19:35). John the Baptist’s message (5:33) and the testimony of the BD (19:35; 21:24) are designated as true. John uses the adjective “true” (ἀληθῶς) to describe statements made by people (4:18, 37; 8:17), people’s knowledge of the truthfulness of Jesus’ claims (7:26; 17:8), and affirmation from the lips of Jesus’ followers on the identity of Jesus as prophet and savior (4:42; 6:14; 7:40; 10:41). Conversely, John describes invalid testimony as untrue (5:31; 8:13–14, 16) and assigns untruth to Satan (8:44). De la Potterie summarizes the Johannine presentation of truth in the person of Jesus. He writes:

[T]here is a close relationship between the revealed truth and the actual person of Jesus...Jesus is not just a vehicle of revelation like Moses and the other prophets, who remained so to speak, exterior to their message...only in Christ has the total and definitive revelation arrived.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁵ The way, the truth, that *leads* to life. See Bennema, *Power*, 226 fn. 54; Scott, *Sophia*, 126.

²⁸⁶ Ignace de la Potterie, “The Truth in Saint John,” in *The Interpretation of John*, ed. John Ashton (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 71.

Thus, although ἀλήθεια is attributed to various themes in GJohn, for John to attribute the revelation about God exclusively to Jesus (1:18) is consistent with the Johannine presentation of Jesus being one with God (10:30; 14:9) and being the embodiment of truth (14:6).

The relationship between the truth and the believer (as a member of the divine family) consists in the disciple receiving the ability to know the truth and the disciple remaining in the truth to affirm his status as a true disciple (8:31–32). To be a child of God is to accept Jesus’/God’s words/truth (8:31, 37–38, 40, 47) as having originated from God (vv. 26, 28, 38, 40); and to believe Jesus’/God’s words/truth (vv. 24, 45, 46) by the ability that is initiated by God (v. 47) and confirmed by love for Jesus (v. 42). Schnackenburg writes, “Discipleship means to listen to the revealer’s voice in faith and obedience, and so demonstrate that one belongs to him (cf. 10:4, 5, 27).”²⁸⁷ True disciples are expected to remain in his word (8:31, μένω) whereas his antagonists do not make a place (χωρέω)²⁸⁸ for his word (v. 37) and are not able to hear it (vv. 43–46) because the words of God are heard by those who are of God (v. 47; see also 1:13). Whereas the devil and the members of his family are characterized by untruth (8:44), the follower of Jesus is characterized by truth (3:21; 18:37) because he affirms the truthfulness of God (3:33) and Jesus as the agent of God’s revelation and the means of salvation (17:8). John challenges his readers to keep (τηρέω) Jesus’ word because it affirms their status as his disciples (8:31–32). John presents Jesus as an example of keeping (τηρέω) God’s word, which validated his relationship with God (8:55). A willingness to hear, keep, and remain in the words of Jesus confirms the individual as a true disciple who is in a filial relationship with the Father because that individual is adhering to the paradigm of obedience to God’s word as established by Jesus’ obedience to God’s word (8:55). In sum, John promotes discipleship by noting that only a disciple is able to hear the truth (8:47) inasmuch as she has been brought into the divine family by God’s initiative (note ἐκ

²⁸⁷ Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:191.

²⁸⁸ In John 21:25, the same term carries the meaning of acceptance and understanding of information. This is similar to the usage in Matt 19:11–12. Elsewhere in the NT, χωρέω refers to physical space

τοῦ θεοῦ, 8:47); and, in the end, an individual's continuation in Jesus' teaching affirms that individual as a true disciple (8:31b).

2.2.1.3b Freedom from Sin

The third benefit of membership in the divine family is freedom from sin. The slavery motif is inserted into the theme of family in 8:31–37.²⁸⁹ In these verses, Jesus is portrayed as the agent (note the sending and submission motifs in vv. 26–30) who frees the believer from slavery to sin (vv. 33, 36). The accusation of enslavement to sin is directed against “the Jews” who had initially believed in Jesus (8:30, 36). The evidence of slavery to sin is the practice of sin (v. 34). Jesus claims to have the exclusive authority to free people from the tyranny of sin (v. 36)²⁹⁰ and to bring them into a permanent relationship with God as Father in his household (8:35–36) because he is “the Son” (v. 36) who is in a close relationship with the Father (vv. 28–29).²⁹¹ Refusal to believe that Jesus is sent by God will lead to the permanent enslavement to sin and ultimate death in sin (v. 24).²⁹² The negative particle in 8:24, “unless” (ἐὰν μὴ), restricts the means for deliverance from sin to belief in Jesus as God's agent.²⁹³ In 8:36, the emphatic ὄντως ἐλεύθεροι ἔσεσθε stresses the future reality of the disciple

(Mark 2:2; John 2:6; 2 Cor 7:2); in Matt 15:17 it means physical progress; and in 2 Pet 3:9 it means intellectual/spiritual progress. *BDAG*, “χωρέω,” 1094.

²⁸⁹ Vellanickal proposes a chiasmic structure of 8:31–36, with the question by “the Jews” to Jesus in verse 33 as the focal point—“how do you say that you will become free?” Vellanickal's chiasm falls short since he does not include verse 37 which continues the themes of σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ and ὁ λόγος ὁ ἐμὸς and thus verse 37 belongs with verses 31–36. Neyrey correctly proposes verses 31–37 as a chiasm with the outer limits of the chiasm in v. 31b and v. 37c in reference to “my word” and the focal point in v. 35b, “the son continues forever.” Thus, remaining in the word of Jesus is critical to true discipleship and to abiding permanently in the house of the Father. Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John in Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 234–40; Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 286–87.

²⁹⁰ Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 288.

²⁹¹ Van der Watt argues that the language is metaphoric since sin is not a literal slave master. Van der Watt, *Family*, 197–98.

²⁹² Hylen points out that since the conversation between Jesus and “the Jews” occurred during Sukkot (Lev 23:39–43), which commemorates freedom from Egyptian slavery, the claim of “the Jews” that they have never been slaves to anyone (8:32) suggests intentional distancing from ancient slavery but also a misunderstanding of their history and Scripture. Hylen, *Imperfect*, 124.

²⁹³ John 8:24, ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ πιστεύσητε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι ἀποθανεῖσθε ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν.

as a freed individual.²⁹⁴ Vellanickal calls this a “permanent standing in the household of [the] Father.”²⁹⁵

The counterpart to membership in God’s household is to be designated a child of the devil.²⁹⁶ Jesus accuses “the Jews” of being not only slaves of sin (v. 34) but also of being children of the devil (v. 44) because of their actions toward him (vv. 44–47). The notion that the behavior of a child was traced to the father was a staple of the sociology of the ancient family (1 John 3:9–10). Van der Watt writes:

It was further believed that a person’s character and personality were given to him via the seed of his father and was augmented by education and other circumstances. These conditions also determined the expected behavior of that person (8:31–59; 1 John 2:29; 3:9–10).²⁹⁷

John applies the same principle of tracing one’s heritage through one’s actions to “the Jews” when tracing their sonship to the devil. During an exchange between “the Jews” and Jesus, “the Jews” link their heritage back to Abraham. In response, Jesus compares the behavior of Abraham with their current behavior to argue that the claim of “the Jews” to be from Abraham fails due to the difference between the actions of Abraham and the actions of “the Jews.” Rejection of Jesus (vv. 37, 40, 42) and his message (vv. 37, 43, 45, 46, 47) indicates that a person is under the influence of the devil. Whereas, affection for Jesus (v. 42); hearing (vv. 43, 47) and keeping (vv. 51–52) the word of Jesus; honoring Jesus (v. 49); knowing God (vv. 19, 55); and imitating the works of Abraham (vv. 39–40) indicates that an individual is “from God” (v. 47). Thus Jesus consigns “the Jews” to the family of the devil (vv. 31–47) because they are seeking to kill him (v. 37) and because they do not accept the truth (vv. 44–47). While John portrays Jesus as accusing “the Jews” of following in the behavioral pattern of the devil, John also presents Jesus as fulfilling the will of God, *his* Father (8:38–47, 55).²⁹⁸ Jesus illustrates that God is his Father by attributing his

²⁹⁴ Vellanickal similarly sees emphasis in this clause. Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 292.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 357.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 287.

²⁹⁷ Van der Watt, *An Introduction to the Johannine Gospel and Letters*, 55.

²⁹⁸ Malina and Rohrbaugh note, “genealogy can be deduced from one’s subsequent behavior and character; and behavior and character offer solid indication of one’s genealogy.” Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998), 165.

own works (5:19; 8:38) and words (8:28; 14:9–10) to the Father’s influence, and by claiming obedience to God’s word (8:55). The tension over family pedigree escalates (8:41, 44, 48, 52), ultimately climaxing with “the Jews” attempting to kill Jesus (8:59) because he asserted that God was his Father (vv. 54–58).

2.2.1.4 Summary

In summary, the first observation I make concerning the benefit of membership in God’s family is that John uses the verbs γίνομαι, γεννάω, δίδωμι, ἔλκω, and the expression ἐκ θεοῦ to stress the divine initiative in integrating an individual into the divine family. John 1:11–13 indicates that membership in the divine family is a privilege conferred on the believers in Jesus. In 8:31–59 John features accompanying benefits to participation in the divine family, namely, the believer understands the truth (8:31, 43, 45, 47, 51–52), is affirmed as a true disciple (v. 31), and is freed from slavery to sin (8:24, 32–36). John portrays Jesus as extending these promises to “the Jews” (who displayed partial faith in Jesus) in order to motivate them to commit fully to Jesus (vv. 30–31). The response of “the Jews” in 8:59 demonstrates that they did not heed the challenge to continuous discipleship (vv. 30–31, 45, 47). The placement of these benefits alongside the challenge to discipleship suggests that John is presenting a case to his audience to believe in Jesus on account of the promise of becoming children of God.

2.2.2 Eternal Life: Ability and Quality of Relating in the Divine Family

Membership in the divine family involves God granting life (ζωή) to the believer just as begetting involves life. That is, new birth by God both makes one part of the family and bestows new life (ζωή).²⁹⁹ Whereas birth from above brings an individual into the divine family, ζωή describes the believer’s ongoing experience in the divine family. In this section, I argue that ζωή refers to the disciples’ participation in the life of God and the ability and quality of the disciples to relate to the Father, the Son, and

²⁹⁹ As Van der Watt notes, “Birth is the introduction to life and life is the consequence of birth...Life and birth are both spiritual, the one leads to the other, the one is not possible without the other and the same agents are involved in both.” Van der Watt, *Family*, 177.

to the others members within the divine family. This ability and quality is directly proportional to the disciple's knowledge of the Father and the Son, as the disciple is empowered by the Spirit.³⁰⁰ Moreover, this life is possessed by the disciple during his lifetime and extends into the eschatological future. Thus, ultimately ζωή describes both the quality of life³⁰¹ and its quantity (i.e., duration). Regarding discipleship, ζωή acts as the energizing force for devotion to Jesus and all the while Jesus is simultaneously the sustainer of ζωή (11:25–26; 14:6, 19; 17:3).

Before I delve into the study of ζωή in GJohn, for the purpose of clarification, I note that John distinguishes between ζωή and entering/seeing the kingdom of God that can be designated as salvation. Concerning entering/seeing the kingdom of God, this refers to the state of an individual who is delivered from sin (8:21, 24, 31–36; 9:41; 16:9), death and judgment (5:21–29; 12:47–50), destruction (3:16; 10:9–10), and the devil (8:44);³⁰² whereas ζωή refers to the interaction within the family of God. While some have asserted that John uses ζωή as a substitute for the Synoptic concept of the kingdom of God,³⁰³ there are good reasons to keep the two concepts separate.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ I build on Van der Watt's definition of ζωή: "the ability to act and relate within the divine reality." Van der Watt, "Everlasting Life," 9. Elsewhere Van der Watt writes, "They (believers) share the qualitative life Jesus brought from God." Van der Watt, *Family*, 178. My definition includes the components from John 6:63 and 17:3 which I suggest are essential to John's presentation of ζωή; especially the referent to knowledge in 17:3 which seems to be John's synthesis of ζωή (see §2.2.2.2a below).

³⁰¹ Dodd observes, "Hebrew conception of life is always one of action, movement and enjoyment," thus *quality* is a fitting term to describe these aspects of ζωή. C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), 150.

³⁰² Similarly, Bennema, *Power*, 154 fn. 164, 174, 180.

³⁰³ Brown, *John*, 159; Bultmann, *John*, 152 fn. 2; J. Alexander Findlay, *The Way, the Truth and the Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940), 225; Archibald M. Hunter, *The Work and Words of Jesus*, Rev. ed. (London: SCM, 1950), 77; Archibald M. Hunter, *According to John: The New Look at the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1968), 107; Rainbow, *Theology*, 277–78. Vellanickal sees kingdom of God and eternal life as synonymous and because of the meaning of ζωή in the SG and because both concepts appear in the context of the divine family through divine begetting by the work of the Spirit (3:3–8, 15–21). Vellanickal argues that since *monogenes* occurs only in 1:11–18 and in 3:15–21, and because "believing in his name" is only found in 1:12–13 and in 3:15–18, the concept of becoming a child of God and entering the kingdom of God are interchangeable. However, I argue below that begetting precedes the experience of ζωή. Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 209, 213, 225. Frey similarly argues that the conditional structure and the structural parallel between John 3:3, 5 and 3:14–15, 16, 36b demonstrates that the language of the kingdom that was characteristic of Jesus' early ministry has been "transferred into the typically Johannine [theological]

Middleton, a proponent of equating ζωή with the kingdom of God, appeals to the SG to support his view, stating that “‘eternal life’ is basically John’s preferred way of referring to the kingdom of God, which itself is both future and present in the Synoptics.”³⁰⁵ Middleton understands the new birth rhetoric in John 3 as equal to repentance and faith in the SG. However, Middleton seems to overlook a few Johannine features when he equates the Johannine language with the Synoptic vocabulary. First, if eternal life *is* the kingdom of God, then why does John place both concepts in 3:1–21 as though they are distinct rather than featuring only one of the concepts? This usage of the two concepts in a single pericope suggests that the two ideas are not identical in meaning.³⁰⁶ Second, John develops his own version of the kingdom of God especially in his thematization of the kingship of Jesus (e.g., 1:49; 3:3–8; 6:14; 12:13–15; 18:33–37; 19:3, 12, 14–16, 19–21), which suggests that John does not equate ζωή with the Synoptic motif of the kingdom of God. Third, as I argue below, ζωή refers specifically to the disciple’s ability and quality of relating with the Father and the Son, rather than it referring to the kingdom of God. Moreover, ζωή is one of the benefits enjoyed *within* the kingdom of God, rather than representing the kingdom of God itself.

Köstenberger, an advocate of a view similar to that of Middleton, asserts that John replaces the Synoptic theme of the kingdom of God with ζωή for political and theological reasons.³⁰⁷ First, Köstenberger argues: “The primary reason for this substitution may be that ‘kingdom’ is a concept rooted in the realm of this world,

language.” Frey also observes that the reason for the disappearance of the “kingdom of God” saying after John 3 is because the “kingdom of God” is transferred into Jesus’ kingship that is inaugurated on the cross, resulting in eternal life to the believers in Jesus. *Pace* Frey, I argue in §2.2.2.2b that the concepts of the “kingdom of God” and “eternal life” can be held simultaneously in the progressively-realized view of eschatology. Jörg Frey, “From the ‘Kingdom of God’ to ‘Eternal Life’: The Transformation of Theological Language in the Fourth Gospel,” in *John, Jesus, and History, Volume 3: Glimpses of Jesus through the Johannine Jesus*, ed. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2016), 439–58, citing 452.

³⁰⁴ Van der Watt similarly views life and kingdom as close but not identical soteriological concepts. Van der Watt, *Family*, 377, 381.

³⁰⁵ J. Richard Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2014), 246.

³⁰⁶ U. E. Simon, “Eternal Life in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. F. L. Cross (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1957), 98.

³⁰⁷ Köstenberger, *Theology*, 285–86.

harking back to kings in Israel's history, including David and Solomon, while 'life' is a transcendent, universal category for all humanity, not merely Israel."³⁰⁸ Second, Köstenberger suggests that John wrote too closely to the Jewish War and therefore refrained from politically charged terminology of kingship (11:51–52).³⁰⁹ However, John does not refrain from political and theological kingdom imagery (1:49; 6:14; 12:13–15; 18:33–19:21; see also §4.5). The Gospel presents Jesus both as the Jewish king and as the international savior (4:42; 12:21). Moreover, Thomas' confession—"My Lord and my God" (20:28)³¹⁰—can also be seen as politically subversive. Thus, John does utilize both political and theological terminology in reference to Jesus. Remarking on this discussion of the distinction between the kingdom of God and ζωή, Filson rightly noted that as the Synoptic writers speak of both, eternal life and the kingdom of God, so John, "the writer of the Fourth Gospel seized upon and expanded this theme to express what God gives the believer in Jesus Christ."³¹¹ In other words, in GJohn, ζωή is not equivalent to the kingdom of God, but instead it is a benefit that the believer receives as part of salvation and entrance into the kingdom of God.³¹²

Before turning to my argument that ζωή refers to the ability and quality of relating within the divine family, I discuss David Ihenacho's proposal in which he elevates ζωή to be the central integrating motif of the Gospel. David Ihenacho writes: "I will try to demonstrate...that life is at the center of the Johannine language, symbolism, and spirituality, and that it is the common meaning of the Johannine

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 285.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 286.

³¹⁰ For a discussion of the use of the title *dominus et deus* in reference to Domitian, see Suetonius, *Dom.* 13.1–2; Martial, *Epigrams*, 5.8.1; 7.34.8; 8.2.6. Warren Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 71–72, 195–97; Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 165–66; Adolf Deissmann, *Light From the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, 4th ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927), 362.

³¹¹ Floyd F. Filson, "The Gospel of Life: A Study of the Gospel of John," in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation in honor of O. A. Piper*, ed. W. Klassen and G. F. Snyder (New York, NY: Harper, 1962), 115.

³¹² Bennema, *Power*, 174, 180.

community and its chief integrative concept.”³¹³ He proposes that, “Eternal life is for the Johannine Christians the main reason of their existence as a Christian community.”³¹⁴ He defends the priority of ζωή above other Johannine concepts by pointing to “special places of occurrence” of ζωή which “flesh out arguments...liven up discourses...[and] deliver the central message of the passage.”³¹⁵

Although Ihenacho correctly links ζωή with the social turmoil of John’s readers which leads him to view ζωή as the “major literary instrument”³¹⁶ put forward by John as a “coping mechanism”³¹⁷ in the social context of turmoil, I propose that ζωή should be understood in conjunction with the family motif. Ihenacho claims that “most of the sayings associated with Jesus in the Johannine community are all related to the issues of life.”³¹⁸ However, the distribution of ζωή in GJohn brings Ihenacho’s claim into question since the term appears mostly in chapters 1–12 and only three times in the FD and once in 20:31.³¹⁹ The FD contains some of Jesus’ most substantial discourses, but contains only three references to life (14:6; 17:2, 3), and in all three instances, ζωή is syntactically placed in proximity to the Father and the Son, consistent with the rest of GJohn. In GJohn, ζωή is always interrelated with the family motif.³²⁰ Thus, it seems more appropriate to view ζωή as a benefit that is received within the divine family motif rather than as a separate central theme as proposed by Ihenacho.

Although John discusses various corollary benefits that are enjoyed by the disciple within the divine family (see below), I elevate ζωή (within the divine family) above other benefits because of frequency (see §2.2.2.1) and prominence. This

³¹³ Ihenacho, *Community*, xx. Similarly, Quast and Mussner see eternal life as John’s main concept for salvation. See also Franz Mussner, *Zōē; Die Anschauung vom “Leben” im vierten Evangelium*, MTS 1. HA 5 (München: Karl Zink Verlag, 1952), 186–87; Quast, *Reading*, 25.

³¹⁴ Ihenacho, *Community*, 145.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 44.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, xix.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 208.

³¹⁹ Admittedly ζωή is included in the purpose statement but it functions subserviently to Christology. See discussion concerning Hera’s work in §1.3 and §1.8.

warrants a more substantial treatment of ζωή in comparison with other benefits derived from membership in the divine family.³²¹ The prominence of ζωή is evident in its appearance in the prologue (1:4), Peter’s confession (6:68), Jesus’ declaration that he is life (14:6), the use of ζωή in Jesus’ prayer (17:2–3), and the inclusion of ζωή in the Gospel’s purpose statement (20:30–31). Moreover, only the Johannine Jesus declares, “I have come that they may have life (ζωή)” (10:10). This statement appears in juxtaposition to Jesus’ affirmation of having to give up his own life (ψυχή) in order to offer life (ζωή) to his disciples/sheep (10:10–18; see also 3:14–15). John presents Jesus as receiving two commandments from his Father—(1) to lay down and take up his own life (ψυχή, 10:18) and (2) to bestow eternal life (ζωή αἰώνιος, 12:49–50). John consistently applies distinct terms for physical life in contrast to spiritual life (ζωή) in order to make certain that Jesus gives up his physical life (ψυχή), not the life (ζωή) that flows from his relationship with God. Additionally, the strategic placement of ζωή in discourses and pericopes that spotlight discipleship suggests a vital importance of this concept in the Gospel, and this, in turn, prompts the question of this thesis: what are the benefits of discipleship? However, I am not elevating ζωή on a par with family, abiding, or friendship because ζωή is integrally embedded into the divine family imagery in GJohn, so it is more appropriate to understand ζωή as a sub-benefit within the divine family motif.

I analyze the appearances of ζωή and its function within the Johannine imagery of the divine family as a benefit derived from discipleship by investigating its three aspects: linguistic cache, thematic strands, and its related imagery of light, water, and bread.³²² The holistic understanding of these three aspects will support the

³²⁰ Every use of ζωή and αἰώνιος ζωή in GJohn is in association with familial terminology in the near context or as in the case of 1:4, in the broader context of 1:1–14. See appendix C for a chart on every usage of ζωή and αἰώνιος ζωή in GJohn.

³²¹ See listing in §2.1.

³²² It is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate the background of ζωή and is unnecessary since many scholars have queried this question. See Ashton, *Understanding*, 399–405; Filson, “Gospel of Life,” 115–18; Ihenacho, *Community*, 235–89; Abiola Mbamalu, “‘Life’ in the Fourth Gospel and its Resonances with Genesis 1–3,” *In die Skriflig* 38 no. 1 (2014): Art. #1719, pp. 1–5; George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity*, Expanded ed., HTS 56 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). Bennema

contention that ζωή in GJohn buttresses John's presentation of divine family as a benefit of discipleship.

2.2.2.1 The Linguistic Cache of ζωή

Appearing 56 times in GJohn, ζωή is John's preferred term for the notion of life.

These uses are distributed as follows: 17 times as αἰώνιος ζωή or ζωή αἰώνιος; 19 times as ζωή; 17 times as ζάω; and three appearances of the verb ζωοποιέω.³²³ Of the 56 occurrences of ζωή, only three references convey physical life (4:50, 51, 53).³²⁴

Additionally, John's primary term for physical life is ψυχή, which appears 11

argues that sapiential Jewish writings lie behind GJohn. Mussner argues that ζωή in GJohn is the continuation of the OT, Pauline, and synoptic teaching on life. Feuillet views ζωή through the lens of oriental religions. Dodd sees Hellenistic mysticism in John's discussion of eternal life. Appasamy contextualized ζωή in Indian religious thought, comparing it to the spiritual life of the *bhaktas*. Bultmann viewed the entire Gospel as situated in Gnosticism. A. J. Appasamy, *The Johannine Doctrine of Life: A Study of Christian and Indian Thought* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1934), 6, 12, 44; Bennema, *Power*, 42–99; Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:10; Rudolf Bultmann, “ζάω,” *TDNT*, 832–75; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 201; Feuillet, *Études*, 175–80; Mussner, *Zōē*, 186.

³²³ The distribution of the 56 terms in 44 texts demonstrates concentration in John 4, 5, and 6. Knight observes that every occurrence of life except in 6:68 appears on the lips of Jesus. Additionally, 10 of 17 references of ζωή αἰώνιος and 24 of 36 uses of ζωή are contained in John 5–12, which describe the hostility of “the Jews” and the crowds toward Jesus. This leads Knight to conclude that “by using language that points beyond persecution and natural life in this manner, the implied author allows the reader to view the temporal effects of hostility and persecution against the backdrop of the eternal promises spoken from Jesus’ own lips. The implied author thus encourages the reader to remain faithful in his or her commitment to Jesus.” William E. Knight, “Defining Discipleship in the Fourth Gospel: A Narrative Analysis of the Motif for the Implied Reader” (Ph.D. Dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001), 169.

³²⁴ In SG, ζωή carries a futuristic meaning with the following distribution: 7 of 13 in GMatthew; 4 of 7 in GMark; and 5 of 17 in GLuke. In John 4:50–53, the use of ζωή in reference to physical life is understood by Ihenacho as carrying a theological meaning, in that Jesus gave the official's son divine life not just physical life. Ihenacho appeals to 5:1–47 to argue that the conflict between Jesus and “the Jews” was over Jesus extending ζωή to the paralytic rather than Jesus healing on the Sabbath. However, although 5:19–47 centers on Jesus' authority to extend ζωή, and 5:1–18 and 5:19–47 are linked with ἐργάζομαι/ἔργα, John does not include ζωή in 5:1–18. Instead, John denotes the Sabbath (5:9, 10, 16) and Jesus' appeal to God being his Father (5:18) as the basis for the conflict with “the Jews.” Moreover, in 5:20, the description of ζωή as a greater work than the healing of the paralytic suggests that Jesus did not grant ζωή to the paralytic. Thus, I disagree with Ihenacho that Jesus extended ζωή to the paralytic and therefore the use of ζῆ in reference to the official's son carries a theological meaning. Instead, I concur with Barrett who sees ζῆ in reference to the official's son as a Hebraism with the simple meaning of revived back to physical life (cf. Num 21:8 LXX where ζήσεται is used for restoration to physical life). Barrett, *John*, 248; Ihenacho, *Community*, 185 fn. 11, 209.

times.³²⁵ Thus, John strategically uses *ψυχή* for physical life and *ζωή* for the ability and quality of relating in the divine family.³²⁶ Moreover, the juxtaposition of *ψυχή* with *ζωή* in 12:25 spotlights the permanency of *ζωή* in that the former ends while the latter is modified by *αἰώνιον* to describe its duration.³²⁷ Additionally, Van der Watt has shown that John's use of *αἰώνιος ζωή* or the absolute *ζωή* carries the same meaning.³²⁸ Consequently, I will use *ζωή* as the default term for the concept of (eternal) life.

2.2.2.2 *The Thematic Strands of ζωή*

The Johannine presentation of life is clustered around certain themes that enhance the function of *ζωή* and which are corollary benefits to membership in the divine family.³²⁹ This thematic constellation consists of knowledge; avoidance of judgment, death, and destruction; and resurrection. The imagery of *ζωή* consists of light, water, and bread. The goal of this section is to demonstrate that John develops *ζωή* around the above themes in relation to discipleship.

³²⁵ John 10:11, 15, 17, 24; 12:25 (2x), 27; 13:37, 38; 15:13; 18:18. By contrast, 18 times in GMatthew; 8 times in GMark; 16 times in GLuke. The verb *βίωω* appears only once in the NT, in 1 Pet 4:2 where it refers to duration of life. The noun *βίος* is entirely absent from GJohn although it appears 15 times in the NT with the meanings of duration of life (Luke 8:43; 1 Cor 6:3, 4; 1 Tim 2:2; 2 Tim 2:4), manner of life (Luke 8:14; 21:34; Acts 26:4; 1 John 2:16), and wealth (Mark 12:44; Luke 15:12, 30; 21:4; 1 John 3:17). H. G. Link, "Life," *NIDNTT*, 475.

³²⁶ Bennema demonstrates that the same distinction between *ψυχή* (physical life) and *ζωή* (life of God and gift to people) is evident in Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach. Bennema, *Power*, 139.

³²⁷ Schnackenburg, *John*, 354.

³²⁸ J. G. Van der Watt, "The Use of *αἰώνιος* in the Concept *ζωή αἰώνιος* in John's Gospel," *NT* 31 no. 3 (1989): 217–28. Most scholars view *ζωή* and *ζωή αἰώνιος* interchangeably. See Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:19; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 144.

³²⁹ Willett only notes two associated themes with life: revelation and faith. Admittedly, his study is to view GJohn thorough the lens of Jewish W/wisdom literature, yet surprisingly he makes no association between life and family, knowledge, water, and bread. Michael E. Willett, *Wisdom*

2.2.2.2a Ζωή and Knowledge

In the definition of ζωή above, I incorporated knowledge of God and Christ because of the frequent pairing of these two concepts.³³⁰ Rainbow captures the conceptual closeness of life and knowledge when he declares: “Knowing God and being known by him, then, is the goal and content of life.”³³¹ However, it is difficult to restrict knowledge exclusively to the discussion of ζωή and the divine family because John’s epistemological terminology is also embedded into the imagery of abiding (14:15–24) and friendship (15:12–17).³³² Therefore, here I focus on John’s explanation of knowledge in relation to ζωή. My review of knowledge is more extensive than the themes of the kingdom of God, death, judgment, resurrection, and the symbols of light, water, and bread because John refers to knowledge (and its synonyms) more frequently.³³³

Christology in The Fourth Gospel (San Francisco, CA: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), 122–25.

³³⁰ The proximity between life and knowledge is noted by Westcott who writes, “knowledge which is life.” Westcott, *John*, 239.

³³¹ Rainbow, *Theology*, 308.

³³² Kee notes that the theme of knowledge is more prominent in GJohn than in the other Gospels as evidenced by the more frequent occurrence of γινώσκω, οἶδα, and γνωρίζω. H. C. Kee, “Knowing the Truth: Epistemology and Community in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Neotestamentica et Philonica: Studies in Honor of Peder Borgen*, ed. D.E. Aune, T. Seland, and J.H. Ulrichsen (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 254.

³³³ John’s epistemological terminology consists in Jesus’/God’s words (λόγος, ῥῆμα), teaching/teacher (διδάσκειν, διδάσκαλος, διδαχή), truth (ἀλήθεια), knowledge (γινώσκω, οἶδα), to make known (γνωρίζω, only in 15:15; 17:26), remembrance (μνησκόω, μνημονεύω), examine (ἐραυνάω, only in 5:39; 7:52), explain (ἐξηγέομαι, only in 1:18), understanding (νοέω, only in 12:40), reveal/declare (ἀναγγέλλω, ἀπαγγεῖλω), declare (ἀπαγγέλλω, only in 16:25), reveal/shine (φαίνω, φανερώω), disclose (ἐμφανίζω, only in 14:21, 22). Additional terms of apprehension are hearing (ἀκούω), seeing (ὁράω), and beholding (θεάομαι) which are dispersed throughout GJohn. For a recent thematic treatment of apprehension of Jesus in GJohn, see Josaphat C. Tam, *Apprehension of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, WUNT 2.399 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015). For studies of John’s epistemological vocabulary, see Cornelis Bennema, “Christ, the Spirit and the Knowledge of God: A Study in Johannine Epistemology,” in *The Bible and Epistemology: Biblical Soundings on the Knowledge of God*, ed. M. Healy and R. Parry (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 109–10 ; James Gaffney, “Believing and Knowing in the Fourth Gospel,” *TS* 26 no. 2 (1965): 217–20.

John primarily develops the theme of knowledge through the verbs γινώσκω (63 times) and οἶδα (84 times). A survey³³⁴ of the uses of both terms demonstrates the interchangeability of the two terms in GJohn.³³⁵ Based on the synonymous use of γινώσκω and οἶδα, knowledge in GJohn can be defined as progressive apprehension of revelation that results in a life-giving relationship that is characterized by affection³³⁶ and cognition.³³⁷ This knowledge pertains to a single relationship that is

³³⁴ The following chart catalogs the occurrences of γινώσκω and οἶδα in GJohn.

	γινώσκω	οἶδα
Jesus' common knowledge	4:1; 5:6; 6:15	6:6, 61; 7:15; 8:37; 19:10
Jesus' supernatural knowledge	1:48; 2:24–25; 5:42; 16:19; 21:17	6:64; 13:1, 3, 11; 18:4; 19:28; 21:15, 16, 17
People's common knowledge	4:53; 7:26, 27, 49, 51; 8:52; 11:57; 12:9; 13:28, 35; 18:15, 16; 19:4, 20	2:9; 4:25; 5:13; 6:42; 7:27, 28; 9:12, 20, 21, 25, 29, 31; 11:49; 12:35; 15:15; 18:2, 21; 19:35; 20:2, 13, 14; 21:4, 12, 24
People's understanding of truth	7:17; 8:28, 32; 10:38; 14:31; 17:23	3:2; 4:42; 11:22, 24
People's lack of understanding of truth/Jesus	3:10; 8:27, 43, 55; 10:6; 16:3; 17:25	1:26, 31, 33; 3:8; 4:10, 22, 32; 7:28; 8:14, 19; 9:24, 25, 29, 30; 15:21
Disciples' knowledge of truth	6:69; 12:6; 13:7, 12; 14:7, 9, 17, 20; 15:15, 18; 17:3, 7, 8, 25, 26	13:17; 14:4; 16:30
Disciples' lack of understanding of truth	6:69; 12:6; 13:7, 12; 14:7, 9, 17, 20; 15:15, 18; 17:3, 7, 8, 25, 26	13:7; 14:5; 16:18; 20:9
Jesus-disciples' intimate knowledge	10:14, 27	10:4, 5; 13:18
Mutual knowledge between the Father and the Son	10:15; 17:25	3:11; 4:22; 5:32; 7:29; 8:14, 55; 11:42; 12:50; 16:30

³³⁵ For the interchangeable use of γινώσκω and οἶδα in GJohn, see Bennema, “Johannine Epistemology,” 115 fn. 28; Rudolf Bultmann, “γινώσκω,” *TDNT*, 689; Rainbow, *Theology*, 301 fn. 69; Eduard Schütz, “Knowledge,” *NIDNTT*, 390–409. Conversely, Potterie argues that γινώσκω emphasizes acquisition of knowledge while οἶδα stresses acquired knowledge. Ignace de la Potterie, “Οἶδα et γινώσκω: Les deux modes de la connaissance dans le quatrième évangile,” *Biblica* 40 no. 3 (1959): 709–25. Vellanickal follows de la Potterie in the same distinction of meaning in γινώσκω and οἶδα. Vellanickal, *Sonship*, 245. Bennema classifies the uses of γινώσκω and οἶδα by content pertaining to salvific benefits: Jesus and the Father, Jesus' identity, Jesus' teaching and its origin, the work of the Father and the Son, the nature of the relationship between the Father and the Son, and the truth. Bennema, *Power*, 126–27. Rainbow provides a broader list of the *objects* of knowledge, e.g., gift of God, food, truth, love, etc. Rainbow, *Theology*, 303 fn. 77.

³³⁶ Filson links eternal life, knowledge, and personal relationship with God. Filson, “Gospel of Life,” 114.

³³⁷ My definition has been shaped by Bennema who views Johannine knowledge as “cognitive perception of the truth on the basis of sensory perception...[in other words]...the saving content of what has been cognitively retrieved from what has been heard and seen.” Bennema, *Power*, 127–28.

dyadic in its experience, namely, with the Father and the Son. Westcott observes the same when he writes, “The knowledge which is life, the knowledge which from the fact that it is vital is always advancing, is two-fold; a knowledge of God and his sole, supreme Majesty, and a knowledge of the revelation which He has made in its final consummation in the mission of Christ.”³³⁸ Thus, we cannot speak of a believer’s separate relationship with the Father and a distinct relationship with the Son. Rather, John’s presentation of a disciple’s knowledge has a dyadic expression as he enjoys ζωή through a relationship with the Father and the Son (8:19). John develops the following aspects about the life-giving knowledge of God: knowledge is an exclusive privilege that is restricted to the disciples, it is progressive in scope, and it yields a relationship with the Father and the Son.

The first corollary benefit of discipleship within the experience of the divine family is the exclusive privilege of knowing God. John links ζωή to knowledge and discipleship (see §1.4 for my definition of discipleship) in 17:2–3.³³⁹ In this passage, John portrays Jesus as summarizing the essence of ζωή in relation to an individual’s purpose—to know Jesus and the Father. Schnackenburg explains:

For man, eternal life is thus the goal of his existence and is fulfilled in the ‘knowledge’ of God and Jesus Christ...This is confirmed by the ἵνα-clause: what we are dealing with is a task which man is set, or— from God’s point of view—an offer to man. γινώσκειν must on no account be understood in a rational or theoretical sense; as in the Semitic use familiar from the Old Testament, it means an inner apprehension and participation, and ultimately communion.³⁴⁰

In 17:2, this knowledge is presented as exclusive since the Son has authority (ἐξουσίαν)³⁴¹ over all flesh, yet the bestowal of αἰώνιος ζωή by the Son is restricted to

³³⁸ Westcott, *John*, 239.

³³⁹ Scholars deem this passage as containing the definition of eternal life. Westcott writes, “the definition is not of the sphere (*in this*), but of the essence of eternal life” (italics original). Similarly, Barrett, *John*, 503; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, BNTC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 435; Stevens, *Johannine Theology*, 314; Thompson, *John*, 350; Van der Watt, “Everlasting Life,” 5; Westcott, *John*, 239. However, Schnackenburg explains that this sentence with a copula is similar to 12:50 (ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ ζωὴ αἰώνιος ἐστίν) which does not necessarily define eternal life so much as delineates what Jesus’ mission was—“The mission God entrusted to Jesus means eternal life for man.” Schnackenburg, *John*, 360.

³⁴⁰ Schnackenburg, *John*, 360.

³⁴¹ See footnote 225.

those who have been given to the Son by the Father (6:37, 39, 44, 45, 65; 17:6). Jesus affirmed this to his disciples when he declared to them that he specifically chose them (6:70; 13:18; 15:16, 19). The benefit of the knowledge of God, in effect, is exclusive to the disciples of Jesus.

The believer's exclusive privilege to know God is also expressed through the image of seeing. Bennema understands "seeing" as operating on two levels—literal and spiritual—and it is on the latter level that "seeing" connotes the possibility of knowing God (i.e., seeing God), that is, as regards both God's relationship with the Son, and God's relationship with the disciples.³⁴² This is observable in 14:7–11 where John presents Jesus as equating knowing Jesus with knowing the Father and with seeing the Father. In this brief dialogue between Jesus, Thomas, and Philip, Jesus challenges his disciples to believe in him three times, and thus a link is forged between the benefit of seeing/knowing the Father with believing in Jesus. In 12:44–45, John portrays Jesus inviting people to believe in him and Jesus appends this invitation to the promise of seeing God. John writes, "Whoever believes in me, does not believe in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me, sees him who sent me." Here again belief in Jesus is rewarded with seeing the Father. In 5:37–38 John depicts Jesus declaring that "the Jews" have never seen the form of the Father. Jesus follows this statement with an accusation of not permitting the word of God to abide with them, not believing in Jesus as God's agent, and refusing to come to Jesus to gain life (vv. 38–40). Here John links the inability to see the Father with unbelief and rejection of Jesus (v. 43). The ability to see the Father is explained in 1:18 (see also 6:46) where John writes that no one has ever seen God but the Son who has "expounded" (ἐξηγέομαι) the Father. Thus to see the Father is to know the Father through the Son, and as observed in 12:44–45 seeing the Father is a benefit conferred on the believer.

Second, the exclusive privilege of knowing God is progressive. In 17:3, we see that possession of ζωή is marked by an increasing of the Father and the Son

³⁴² Bennema, *Power*, 124.

knowledge (note the present subjunctive, γινώσκωσιν).³⁴³ Westcott speaks to the progressive nature of this knowledge when he writes: “Eternal life lies not so much in the possession of a completed knowledge as in the striving after a growing knowledge.”³⁴⁴ Westcott points to the function of ἵνα as delineating an aim/end and to the present tense of γινώσκωσιν to defend eternal life as a continuous understanding of the knowledge of God.³⁴⁵ The progressive character of the knowledge of God is evident in 10:38 where Jesus is presented as saying, ἵνα γνῶτε καὶ γινώσκητε ὅτι ἐν ἐμοὶ ὁ πατὴρ καὶ γὰρ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ. The dual use of γινώσκω (in the aorist subjunctive and subsequently in the present subjunctive) stresses the initial and the ongoing commitment that a disciple makes to the recognition of the oneness of Jesus and the Father (see discussion below).³⁴⁶ Bennema synthesizes the Johannine process of growing in the knowledge of God as follows: “Knowledge of the divine is available to the believer through the aid of the Spirit, and this knowledge stimulates and informs further belief, which guarantees access to further knowledge.”³⁴⁷ He rightly views belief and knowledge as a progressive relationship.³⁴⁸ The continuous nature of knowledge is also affirmed in 17:26 as John transitions from the aorist to the future in describing the progressive nature of the knowledge of God—I made known your name (aorist) and will continue to make it known (future).³⁴⁹ Most likely, this is a promise of the coming Paraclete who will not only remind the disciples of the teachings of Jesus, but who will lead the disciples into deeper truth about Jesus (14:26;³⁵⁰ 15:26; 16:12–15).³⁵¹

³⁴³ Van der Watt calls it a “continuing relating.” Van der Watt, *Family*, 216.

³⁴⁴ Westcott, *John*, 239.

³⁴⁵ Ibid. Commentators disagree on the function of the ἵνα γινώσκωσιν, suggesting a telic force (Stevens, *Johannine Theology*, 314–15), a Semitic force (i.e., “that,” see Keener, *John*, 1055), or a purpose clause (Westcott, *John*, 239).

³⁴⁶ Similarly, Bennema, *Power*, 128.

³⁴⁷ Bennema, “Johannine Epistemology,” 127. Bennema investigates Johannine epistemology and concludes that “John’s epistemology is pneumatological and christocentric in nature, is soteriological, ethical and evaluative in its aim, and has cognitive, relational, volitional and affective aspects” (130).

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ For continuous future, see Smyth, *Grammar*, §1910b. The dual use of γνωρίζω (aorist followed by the future tense) stresses continuity between the past and future ministry. Harris, *John*, 293; Lincoln, *John*, 440; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:196.

³⁵⁰ Murray J. Harris notes, “In 14:26, the two verbs should be seen as aoristic futures suggesting “successive occurrences.” Harris, *John*, 263.

Third, through knowledge the disciple is integrated into a relationship with the Father and the Son. In 10:1–30,³⁵² ζῶῃ and knowledge are featured in the figure of the good shepherd and linked with the divine family motif. The concept of knowing is weaved through this pericope by means of γινώσκω (vv. 6, 14 (2x), 15 (2x), 27, also 10:38 (2x)) and οἶδα (vv. 4, 5).³⁵³ The narrative begins by describing the relationship between the shepherd (Jesus) and the sheep (disciples).³⁵⁴ The sheep hear (vv. 3, 4, 8, 16, 27), follow (vv. 3–5, 27), know (vv. 14–15, 27), and belong to the shepherd’s flock (v. 26). In return, the shepherd names (v. 3), leads (vv. 3–4, 16), saves (v. 9), feeds (v. 9), dies for (vv. 11, 15, 18), knows (vv. 14, 27), protects (vv. 28–30), and confers abundant eternal life upon the sheep (vv. 10, 28). John links knowledge with the family motif when he compares the mutual knowledge between the shepherd and the sheep (v. 14) to the reciprocal knowledge between the Father and Jesus (note καθώς in v. 15). The familial language recurs in 10:27–29 where the Father and Jesus protect the sheep that have been given by the Father to Jesus and to whom Jesus granted eternal life; these sheep hear, know, and follow Jesus.

Furthermore, John uses the concept of knowledge to contrast the relationship between the shepherd and his sheep with those who are not the shepherd’s sheep. In verses 4 and 5, the intimacy of the shepherd-sheep relationship is accentuated with the sheep recognizing the voice of their shepherd (οἶδασιν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ) and not recognizing the voice of a stranger (οὐκ οἶδασιν τῶν ἀλλοτρίων τὴν φωνήν). Immediately, the narrator notes in verse six that Jesus’ listeners did not understand (ἔγνωσαν) what he was saying to them (10:6). The irony in this passage is that the

³⁵¹ Ibid.; Westcott, *John*, 248.

³⁵² Dodd sees 10:1–18 as a unit and 10:22–39 as an appendix. Dodd, *Interpretation*, 358–62. I link the two sections through the repeated references to the sheep and life (10:1–18, 26–29).

³⁵³ The other prominent concepts are hearing (ἀκούω, vv. 3, 8, 16, 27) and verbs of motion (i.e., ἐξάγω, vv. 3, 16; ἀκολουθέω, vv. 4, 5, 27; ἐκβάλλω in v. 4; πορεύομαι in v. 4; φεύγω in v. 5; εἰσέρχομαι in v. 9 (2x); ἐξέρχομαι in v. 9).

³⁵⁴ The sheep can refer to the Jewish people and Gentiles (10:16). So, Carson, *John*, 390; Köstenberger, *Missions*, 163. Contra Martyn and Brown, who see “other sheep” as other Christians who are either scattered or from other communities. Raymond E. Brown, “‘Other Sheep not of this Fold’: The Johannine Perspective on Christian Diversity in the Late First Century,” *JBL* 97 (1978): 20; J. Louis Martyn, *The Gospel of John in Christian history: Essays for Interpreters* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1978), 115–21.

divine family is characterized by reciprocal knowledge (vv. 4–5, 14–15, 27), whereas those who do not belong are unable to understand even the simple figure of the shepherd and the sheep (v. 6). Thus, we see from the Good Shepherd parable that, as Van der Watt remarks, “life exists in intimate knowledge of the members of the family.”³⁵⁵

Regarding knowledge being deployed as a benefit of discipleship, John juxtaposes knowledge with believing (5:38, 44, 46; 14:7–11), following (10:4–5, 14–15, 27), keeping God’s word (5:38; 17:3–8), and receiving Jesus (1:11–18; 5:39–43). And in this juxtaposition, John shows how knowledge is a derivative of being a disciple of Jesus. John’s explanation of knowledge is buttressed by the accompanying benefits of salvation (10:9), protection (10:28–29; 17:11–13), performance of greater works (14:12), and love from God (17:26). Based on the above discussion we can understand the theme of knowledge in partnership with ζωή and within the family motif functioning as a benefit of discipleship because it is paired with the aforementioned expressions of discipleship.

2.2.2.2b Ζωή and Eschatology

Johannine ζωή describes both the quality and the quantity of the disciple’s life. Above, I primarily discussed the qualitative benefits of ζωή. In this section, I show that ζωή culminates in eschatological resurrection (i.e., a quantitative benefit), which is presented as a reward of discipleship in light of the possibility of suffering physical death for following Jesus (16:2). I examine the themes of destruction (ἀπόλλυμι), judgment (κρίνω, κρίσις), death (ἀποθνήσκω, θάνατος), and resurrection (ἀνάστασις) in a single section because (1) they all appear in narratives that feature ζωή,³⁵⁶ (2) they frequently appear in close proximity to each other, and (3) they are all associated with Johannine eschatology.³⁵⁷ I argue that Johannine eschatology is

³⁵⁵ Van der Watt, “Everlasting Life,” 12.

³⁵⁶ Life is paired with destruction (3:16; 6:39; 10:28), judgment (5:21–30; 8:12–16; 12:46–50); death and resurrection (5:21–30; 6:39–40, 44, 54, 58; 10:28; 11:23–26).

³⁵⁷ For surveys on Johannine eschatology, see Barrett, *John*, 67–70; Beasley-Murray, *John*, cxxvii–cxlii; Rainbow, *Theology*, 280–85; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:426–37.

progressively realized.³⁵⁸ That is, the believer in Jesus receives eternal life upon integration into the divine family that commences a journey of continuously following Jesus until the consummation in the resurrection. This journey is empowered by the Spirit as the disciple increases in the knowledge of God and Jesus (14:26; 16:13–15; 17:2–3) by remaining in Jesus and his word (8:31; 15:1–11; 17:6, 8) until she enters the presence of Jesus and the Father through the resurrection (6:39, 40, 44, 54; 12:26; 14:1–3; 17:24). Death is not a threat in the present time because ζωή is a present possession. The eschatological rewards for continuously following Jesus are escape from judgment (5:29) and destruction (3:16; 6:39; 10:28), and the conferral of honor (12:26) and glory from the Father (17:22).

The key Johannine passage that juxtaposes realized and unrealized eschatology is 5:21–30.³⁵⁹ The crux of the scholarly disagreement lies in the interpretation of verse 25 in contrast to verses 28–29. Some view 5:25 as referring to spiritual resurrection and 5:28–29 to physical resurrection.³⁶⁰ Bultmann and Schnackenburg see 5:28–29 as a later addition by the redactor to reconcile the Johannine realized eschatology with traditional Christian futuristic eschatology.³⁶¹ Conversely, Boismard sees 5:26–30 as original since it is consistent with the

³⁵⁸ Defended by Beasley-Murray, *John*, 77; R. Alan Culpepper, “Realized Eschatology in the Experience of the Johannine Community,” in *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, ed. Craig R. Koester and R. Bieringer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 253–76; J. C. Davis, “The Johannine Concept of Eternal Life as a Present Possession,” *RQ* 27 (1984): 164–65; Köstenberger, *Theology*, 346; Mbamalu, “‘Life’,” Art. #1719, pp. 1–5; Rainbow, *Theology*, 280–85; Simon, “Eternal Life,” 102; Stevens, *Johannine Theology*, 328–54; Thompson, *John*, 87–91, 129–31; Van der Watt, *Family*, 436. Cf. scholars who defend realized eschatology, Josef Blank, *Krisis: Untersuchungen zur johanneischen Christologie und Eschatologie* (Lambertus-Verlag: Freiburg im Breisgau, 1964), 344; Brown, *John*, cxv–cxi, esp. cxx; Bultmann, *Theology*, 3–92; Bultmann, *John*, 431; Jaime Clark-Soles, “‘I Will Raise [Whom?] Up on the Last Day’: Anthropology as a Feature of Johannine Eschatology,” in *New Currents Through John: A Global Perspective*, ed. Francisco Lozada and Tom Thatcher (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2006), 29–53; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 7, 395; Robert Kysar, *Voyages with John: Charting the Fourth Gospel* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005), 19–25; Quast, *Reading*, 3; John A. T. Robinson, *Jesus and his Coming: The Emergence of a Doctrine* (London: SCM, 1957), 160–85.

³⁵⁹ For a survey of scholarly reconciliation of 5:25 with 5:28–29, see J. G. Van der Watt, “A New Look at John 5:25–9 in the Light of the Use of the Term ‘Eternal Life’ in the Gospel According to John,” *Neot* 19 (1985): 74–76; Rainbow, *Theology*, 278–85.

³⁶⁰ Barrett, *John*, 262–63; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 76–77; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Gospel of Life: Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 11–12; Harris, *John*, 114–15; Moloney, *John*, 179–84; Westcott, *John*, 87.

³⁶¹ Bultmann, *John*, 258–61; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:116. Similarly, L. Schottroff, “ζω, ζωή, ἥς, ἦ,” *EDNT*, 2:108.

Synoptic accounts of the Danielic Son of Man coming to judge³⁶² (e.g., Matt 25:31–46), yet he sees 5:25 as a later addition inserted to accommodate the evolving Christian theology toward realized eschatology (e.g., Eph 2:5–6).³⁶³ Kysar sees the development from unrealized to realized eschatology as evidence of the Johannine community parting ways with the Jewish theology of futuristic eschatology.³⁶⁴ Brown defends multiple Johannine traditions conversing in 5:25–30 with different theological emphases as regards both realized and final eschatology.³⁶⁵ Moule distinguishes between the individualistic (14:22) and the corporate (5:29) eschatological realization, arguing that John minimizes futuristic eschatology because of the concentration on the individual's relation to Christ.³⁶⁶ Van der Watt argues that 5:25 refers to the death of individuals who lived and died before the incarnation and thus had not interacted with Jesus, whereas 5:28–29 describes a future resurrection.³⁶⁷ However, his explanation is not supported by the context³⁶⁸ and is unjustified in light of John's assertion that all people interact with the light (1:3–4, 9–10).

I suggest that understanding ζωή within the notion of progressively realized eschatology (“already-not yet,”³⁶⁹ see 6:47 with 12:25) eliminates the tension between 5:25 and 5:28–29. The importance of ζωή for the congruous reading of verse 25 with verses 28–29 is evident in the eight occurrences of ζωή in 5:19–30 (ζωή, ζω, ζωοποιέω). If the Johannine ζωή refers to participation in the life of God and the

³⁶² M. E. Boismard, “L'évolution du thème eschatologique dans les traditions johanniques,” *RB* 68 (1961): 516–18.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 507–24. For example, Boismard alleges that Pauline eschatology developed from 1 Thess 4:17 to Eph 3:15–17. Boismard examines three sets of doublets in GJohn (12:46–50 and 3:16–19; 5:30–32, 37 and 8:14–18; 5:26–30 and 5:19–25) to conclude that repetition of eternal life, judgment, and the return of Christ suggests redactionistic layers that indicate eschatological development. However, these same passages can be seen as intentionally juxtaposed by John to highlight the realized and unrealized fulfillment of certain of Jesus' promises (see discussion below). *Ibid.*, 518–23.

³⁶⁴ Kysar, *Voyages*, 25, 48.

³⁶⁵ Brown, *John*, 219–21.

³⁶⁶ C. F. D. Moule, “A Neglected Factor in the Interpretation of Johannine Eschatology,” in *Studies in John: Presented to Professor Dr. J. N. Sevenster on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 155–60.

³⁶⁷ Van der Watt, “New Look at 5:25–9,” 71–86.

³⁶⁸ Moloney, *John*, 184.

³⁶⁹ I am adopting the term from Bennema, *Power*, 121 fn. 63; I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 524.

ability and quality of relating within the divine family in the present and in the future, then this dual aspect of “already” and “not yet” must be taken into consideration in reconciling verse 25 with verses 28–29. In 5:21, John affirms Jesus’ right to extend ζωή to others by utilizing present tense verbs, ἐγείρει and ζωοποιεῖ. In 5:24–25, Jesus extends life in the *present* to the one who hears the words of Jesus³⁷⁰ and believes in the one who sent Jesus. John uses the present tense of ἔχω in reference to the believer (v. 24), the Father (v. 26), and the Son possessing life now (v. 26) to emphasize the disciple’s present possession of ζωή.³⁷¹ That is, the one who continually hears and believes (ὁ...ἀκούων καὶ πιστεύων)³⁷² shares in the same life that the Father and the Son possess (5:24–26).

The *futuristic* component of ζωή is introduced in 5:29 where Jesus certifies that the life that was previously given to the believer finds its culmination in a future resurrection. This “not yet” element is reaffirmed with the inclusion of the reference to Son of Man (v. 27),³⁷³ which carries the sense of eschatological judgment.³⁷⁴ This progressive understanding of ζωή (i.e., it is offered to the believer now, but is consummated in the resurrection) is reaffirmed to the crowd in 6:35–59 and to Martha in 11:23–26.³⁷⁵ Every occurrence of resurrection of individuals in GJohn is in

³⁷⁰ John repeatedly states a proper response to the word of Jesus/God indicates belonging to Jesus/God. See John 3:34, 6:63; 8:43, 47; 10:3, 16, 27; 12:47–50; 17:6–14.

³⁷¹ Note the perfect in 5:24 indicating the ongoing effects of having life, μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν.

³⁷² In 5:24 and 5:39–40, Jesus equates the efficacy of his words with the Scriptures in their life-giving potency. In 5:24, the single article controlling the two present tense participles, ὁ τὸν λόγον μου ἀκούων καὶ πιστεύων τῷ πέμψαντί με ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον, stresses the close relationship between continuous hearing and believing of Jesus’ words with eternal life. Smyth notes that a single article with two nouns connected with a καὶ indicates a single notion. Smyth, *Grammar*, §1143; Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 270–90.

³⁷³ Son of Man appears 13 times in GJohn: 1:51; 3:13, 14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23, 34 (2x); 13:31. There is a textual variant in 9:35; some mss. contain τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ (e.g., A L Θ Ψ). For Son of Man in GJohn, see Richard Bauckham, “Messianism According to the Gospel of John,” in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, ed. John Lierman (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 34–68; André Feuillet, “Le triomphe du fils de l’homme,” in *La venue du messie: messianisme et eschatologie* (Desclée de Brouwer, 1962), 149–71; Larry W. Hurtado and Paul Owen, ‘Who is this Son of Man?’: *The Latest Scholarship on a Puzzling Expression of the Historical Jesus*, LNTS 390 (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2011); Benjamin E. Reynolds, *The Apocalyptic Son of Man in the Gospel of John*, WUNT 249 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

³⁷⁴ Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:114.

³⁷⁵ Trudinger interprets Jesus’ assertion to Mary in 11:25, “I am the resurrection and the life,” as a hendiadys and translates it as, “I am the living resurrection.” He points to 11:46–53 as evidence of the

the future tense (5:28–29; 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:23, 24) and only in reference to Jesus is it in the aorist (20:9) or present (11:25).³⁷⁶ Likewise, when the verb ζάω is used with forethought to the resurrection (6:51, 57–58; 11:25–26), the context suggests a future fulfillment of this promise rather than a present reality. Therefore, it is appropriate to understand Jesus' claim Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή (11:25) as Jesus personifying resurrection and life instead of asserting that resurrection is offered in the present.³⁷⁷ Thus, ζωή and resurrection are not equivalent, but the former finds its fullness in the latter.³⁷⁸ The distinction between ζωή and the resurrection is seen in 5:29 where both the good and the evil individuals are resurrected on the last day, and since the evil do not possess ζωή (3:19–21), resurrection and ζωή must not be synonymous. Thompson is right to conclude that participation in the resurrection of the living “seals the verdict”³⁷⁹ of eternal life that is passed in the present (6:40, 44, 54). This “already-not yet” proposal for 5:25 and 28–29 coheres with other Johannine themes that are portrayed as realized and unrealized throughout the Gospel (e.g., judgment, 3:19–21; 12:47–48; life, 6:57–58; 10:10, 28; 14:19; and Jesus' presence with his disciples, 14:1–3, 15–23). Thus, instead of understanding 5:25 and 28–29 as contradictory statements, it is plausible to understand these verses as describing two complementary phases in the salvation process.³⁸⁰

In addition to the resurrection, John also promises to the believer deliverance from sin, death, and destruction. The themes of death and destruction frequently appear together in juxtaposition to ζωή (3:15–18; 5:21–30; 6:39–40; 10:10, 28; 12:25,

impotency of the sign of Lazarus' resurrection to produce genuine faith in Jesus. In contrast, Trudinger notes that in 11:25, Jesus affirms that his death and resurrection is what truly produces life-giving faith and results in eternal life and resurrection. Paul Trudinger, “The Meaning of ‘Life’ in St. John: Some Further Reflections,” *BTB* 6 (1976): 261–62.

³⁷⁶ Pace, Van der Watt who critiques eschatological resurrection and maintains that “in the person of Jesus it seems evident that the resurrection is already there.” Van der Watt, *Family*, 214 fn. 235.

³⁷⁷ So Filson, “Gospel of Life,” 113. Contra, Dodd, *Interpretation*, 148. Borgen similarly affirms the present possession of life by the believer and a future resurrection, which is to be held as a promise in the present. Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo*, NovTSup 10 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), 168 fn. 2.

³⁷⁸ Thompson, *John*, 130.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Similarly, Coloe, *Dwelling*, 100.

47–50), and in these contexts they contain the meaning of being severed from life and the family of God.³⁸¹ John uses *θάνατος* and its derivatives in reference to physical death (e.g., 4:49; 11:14) and separation from God (e.g., 8:21–26, 51, 52; 11:26).³⁸² In the conversation with Martha, Jesus affirms the reality of physical death even in the case of those who possess *ζωή*, thus the promise made to “the Jews” (5:24; 8:21, 24, 51, 52) should be understood as not merely to live forever physically (e.g., 6:49–51, 58), but rather to avoid a different type of death. In 8:21–26, death is described as being from below, remaining in one’s sins, and not being present with Jesus and with the Father. The importance of believing and remaining in Jesus’ word to avoid separation from the Father is affirmed in 8:31–36, where Jesus promises freedom from sin (see also 8:21, 24; 9:41) and permanent abiding in the house. Neyrey points out the importance of Jesus’ word to permanent abiding in the Father’s house through the inclusio of “my word” in 8:31b with 8:37c, with the focus of the chiasm in v. 35b, “the son continues in the house forever.”³⁸³ In 17:6, 8, and 13, reception of Jesus’ word indicates ownership by the Father that leads to presence with the Father (17:24). The other Johannine reference to residing in the house of the Father is 14:1–3 where Jesus promises to his own (13:1) to return for them in order to take them to the Father’s house (14:2–3; 17:24). In 5:24, death is also placed in contradistinction to *ζωή*, which affirms the meaning of death as permanent separation from the life of God. Thus, Jesus’ promise to believers is that they will avoid death, that is, that they will never experience separation from the Father because they possess *ζωή*. This promise is reaffirmed by John’s symbolic use of *ἀπόλλυμι* which is always juxtaposed with familial terminology and *ζωή* (3:16; 6:39; 10:10, 28),³⁸⁴ and thus like death, it also conveys the meaning of separation from the life of God within the divine family. In effect, protection from death and destruction is promised when *ζωή*

³⁸¹ Van der Watt, *Family*, 212.

³⁸² Culpepper adds two additional nuances to the theme of death in GJohn, death of self-seeking and false love (12:24–25) and death as transition for those who already possess eternal life (11:25–26). However, these are mere nuances of physical death and thus I retain the two types of death in GJohn—spiritual and physical. Culpepper, “Realized,” 264.

³⁸³ Neyrey, *John in Cultural*, 234–35.

is conferred in the present, while the threat of death and destruction is not fully extinguished until the believer arrives at the house of the Father (14:1–3). It is then that ζωή is ultimately consummated and its antitheses (i.e., death and destruction) cease to be a threat.

The final theme in the list of eschatological benefits is the escape from judgment. Judgment carries a dual meaning in GJohn, immediate (3:19–21; 5:24) and eschatological (5:27; 12:47–48).³⁸⁵ We can see both elements implied in 3:36 where the wrath of God presently remains (μένει) on the unbeliever who has demonstrated his unbelief through disobedience. This judgment stands in opposition to the promise of present possession of life (ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον), which may suggest that God’s wrath also reaches into the eschatological future when it will be validated by Jesus (5:27–29; 12:48).³⁸⁶ Dodd rightly explains the Johannine notion of judgment as “separation.”³⁸⁷ Dodd argues that in 3:19–21, Jesus as the light enters into the life of the sinner and exposes his deeds. The decision that the sinner makes in favor of darkness and against Jesus separates him from the light. Thus, Jesus is able to claim that he does not judge anyone (3:17; 8:15; 12:47) because the individual has chosen to stand against Jesus and his teaching, and thus the sinner judged/separated himself from Jesus (3:18b–19; 9:39–41). Dodd writes:

[T]he manifestation of the light brings into view the ultimate distinction between truth and falsehood, between good and evil. Hence it is κρίσις, discrimination. Men by their response to the manifestation of the light declare themselves, and so pronounce their own ‘judgment’.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁴ John’s other uses of ἀπόλλυμι refer to food that perishes (6:12, 27), destruction of a nation (11:50), loss of physical life (12:25), and loss of relationships (17:12; 18:9).

³⁸⁵ Bultmann rejected a cosmic eschatological judgment because he viewed Jesus as the redeemer whose arrival fulfilled the predictions of the Messiah and thus he brought the full weight of the eschatological judgment. Bultmann coupled his rejection of an eschatological judgment with his denial of the parousia because Jesus’ arrival was the *krisis* of the world (12:31). However, as argued above, there are indications in GJohn of a progressively realized eschatology and an indication of an eschatological reunion between Jesus and his disciples (12:26; 14:2–3, 28). Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:33–40, 56–58; Bultmann, *John*, 167.

³⁸⁶ Similarly, Clark-Soles, “I Will Raise,” 46.

³⁸⁷ For example, judgment with the meaning of separation also appears in Matt 13:36–43, 47–50; 22:11–14; 25:1–13, 31–46; Eph 5:8–14.

³⁸⁸ Dodd, *Interpretation*, 210.

This same meaning of judgment (i.e., separation) also appears in 8:12–59. Neyrey reconciles Jesus’ declaration in 8:15 (“I judge no one”) with 8:26 (“I have much...to judge”) by showing that 8:12–59 is forensic narrative in which Jesus acts as a judge over “the Jews” as he separates them into two categories.³⁸⁹ Jesus exposes their false belief (8:30); he counters their claim that they are Abraham’s descendants, and instead reveals their true status as slaves of sin (8:32–40); and he contradicts their declaration that they are God’s sons, and instead demonstrates how their actions prove that they belong to the devil (8:41–47, 59). Thus, Jesus allows their own words and actions against him to “separate/judge” them from him (8:15) as he plays the role of a judge (8:26) leading them to the conclusion that they are from below and he is from above (8:23).

In 12:46–50, John also demonstrates how judgment functions both in the present time and in the eschatological future. In 12:47–48, Jesus affirms eschatological judgment that will be mediated by his previously spoken word. Whereas during his earthly career, Jesus’ word delivered people out of darkness (3:18–21; 8:12; 12:46), death (8:24, 51), and sin (8:32–37), and instead granted them life (5:38–40), in the eschatological judgment his word will render a verdict for the unbelievers based on what was decided by them during their lifetime (12:48). In other words, how an individual responds to Jesus’ words (5:31–40, 44–47; 6:63; 8:51–52) will determine her final judgment (12:48–50). Thus, as Dodd explains, “inevitably, those who do not respond to His words, but prefer darkness to light, condemn themselves. Hence the word of judgment on the ‘Last Day’ is no other than the revelation of life and light which Christ gave in his incarnation.”³⁹⁰ In 12:31–34, Jesus is depicted as declaring that the judgment by the Son of Man takes places through the cross, an event that transpired during Jesus’ incarnation: “Now is the judgment of this world.” The world that God loves (3:16) rejected the light (1:10–11) by crucifying God’s agent of deliverance from judgment. Consequently, God now judges the world through the cross, a judgment that is all encompassing since it

³⁸⁹ Neyrey, *John in Cultural*, 227–51.

³⁹⁰ Dodd, *Interpretation*, 211.

extends to the world and its ruler (12:31; 16:11).³⁹¹ But John promises that the follower of Jesus will evade this future judgment and will be protected from death and destruction because he possesses eternal life. Thus, when we collate 3:17–21; 5:21–30; 8:15–16, 26; 12:46–50 we can conclude that John deploys κρίνω/κρίσις with a present and an eschatological sense, but the meaning remains the same, that is, as that of separation.

Revisiting the theme of the Johannine presentation of compensatory benefits of continuous discipleship, I highlight two illustrations (negative and positive) that demonstrate that the above eschatological benefits are rewards for belief in Jesus. In 5:24–29, Jesus promises eternal life, and avoidance of judgment and death to the one who continues to hear and believe (note the present tense participles, ὁ...ἀκούων καὶ πιστεύων, v. 24).³⁹² In verses 37–43, John presents “the Jews” as rejecting Jesus’ offer to come to him and continually believe (note the present tense πιστεύετε in v. 38). He denotes their rejection by stating that they do not hear, do not see, do not permit God’s word to abide in them, do not believe, and do not receive Jesus, which results in them not having eternal life (vv. 37–47). While in 5:21–47 “the Jews” reject Jesus’ exhortation to believe, in 11:25–27, Martha is portrayed as replying to Jesus, “I have believed that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is coming into the world” (v. 27). Martha’s declaration is in response to Jesus’ promise of a future resurrection (11:25–26) to the person who continually believes (ὁ πιστεύων).³⁹³ Thus, in both passages, John features Jesus as encouraging continual belief with the use of the present tense verbs—believe, hear, having God’s word abide in a person, and receiving Jesus. As noted in chapter one, these verbs are expressions of discipleship, and to persuade people to continuous allegiance to Jesus, John portrays Jesus as

³⁹¹ Barrett, *John*, 426–27; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 213; Thompson, *John*, 270–72.

³⁹² Wallace observes that ὁ πιστεύων is a gnomic substantival participle but the progressive sense can be obtained from the meaning of πιστεύω in soteriological contexts. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 620–21.

³⁹³ Beck rejects Martha as a paradigmatic disciple because her christological confession is absent of a faith response to Jesus’ assertion that he has power over Lazarus’ death and because Martha does not testify about Jesus’ teaching, not even to Mary. However, Martha’s confession reiterates the Gospel’s purpose statement (20:30–31) and incorporates the Gospel’s dominant motif of agency/sending, thus I judge Martha’s confession (11:27) as supporting the main purpose of GJohn and Martha can therefore be understood as model of discipleship. Beck, *Discipleship*, 100.

promising eschatological benefits to those who respond to Jesus' challenge. Martha and "the Jews" function as examples of positive and negative responses to Jesus' challenge that belief is rewarded with eternal life (5:40; 11:25–26).

2.2.2.3 *The Johannine Imagery of ζωή in GJohn*

Three symbols orbit the Johannine presentation of ζωή—light, water, and bread—and they will be treated in the order of their appearance in GJohn. Since all three images are appended to ζωή in Jesus' declarations of "I am the light/water/bread" (e.g., 4:10, 14; 6:35, 48; 8:12), Bultmann rightly observes that each image presents Jesus as the one who brings life and who is life.³⁹⁴ More particularly, the image of light stresses Jesus' deliverance of believers out of darkness and his subsequent guidance of the believers in the path of light. The images of water and bread portray Jesus as the source of life and as the one who continually satisfies.³⁹⁵

2.2.2.3a Ζωή, Light, and Darkness

In GJohn, light (φῶς) appears only in John 1–12³⁹⁶ and refers chiefly to Jesus.³⁹⁷ The integration of life and light with the family motif in 1:1–13 and 12:35–36 forms an inclusio between the two passages. In 1:1–13, believers become children of God by receiving and believing in the light, and in 12:35–36, believers in the light become sons of the light.³⁹⁸ The counterpart to light is darkness (σκότος),³⁹⁹ which is the

³⁹⁴ Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:59.

³⁹⁵ Van der Watt, *Family*, 231–32.

³⁹⁶ The light-darkness dualism is predominantly Johannine, sparsely appearing in other NT writings (e.g., Luke 11:35; 2 Cor 6:14; Eph 5:8–14; 1 Thes 5:4–5; 1 Pet 2:9). Brown, *John*, 515.

³⁹⁷ John 1:4, 5, 7, 8, 9; 3:19–21; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35–36, 46. Two exceptions are John the Baptist's ministry as a witness to the light (1:7–8) is called the effusion of the light (5:35) and people do not stumble when they are aided by physical light (11:9–10). John provides two physical examples of the symbolic meaning of light in 9:4–5 and 11:9–10. By contrast, φῶς, with its lexical derivatives never refers to Jesus in Mark, once in Matt 4:16, and once in Luke 2:32. It refers to believers twice in Matt (5:14–16; 6:22–23) and twice in Luke 11:35–36; 16:8, and never in Mark.

³⁹⁸ Scholars note the allusions to the Qumranic language of sons of light and sons of darkness. Barrett, *John*, 429; Brown, *John*, 515–16.

³⁹⁹ By contrast, σκότος with its lexical derivatives never appears symbolically in Mark. In Matt, it appears symbolically as a counterpart to light (4:16; 6:23) and in reference to the locale of eternal judgment (8:12; 22:13; 25:30). In Luke, it appears twice symbolically in juxtaposition to light (1:79; 11:35–36). Scholars have explained the light-darkness motif through the dualism of the decision of faith in light of Jesus' revelation of man's sin (Bultmann, *John*, 7–9), as a spiritual theocentric

realm that is opposed to God, characterized by sin, judgment, and confusion (3:19–21; 5:24; 8:12; 12:35). Bennema defines darkness as lacking “a saving knowledge of God”⁴⁰⁰ because of the dualism of different realms and the enslavement to sin.⁴⁰¹ Therefore, light must be saving knowledge of God, which Bultmann designates as revelation.⁴⁰² Bennema affirms the same view when he writes, “As the light, Jesus brings illuminating revelation that gives life.”⁴⁰³ That is, Jesus as the light reveals how an individual can have a relationship with God that would lead to ζωή (=participation in the divine family). Within this thematic cluster of φῶς-σκότος-ζωή, John features two benefits that a follower of Jesus receives—deliverance from darkness and guidance within the divine family.

The first promise associated with the image of the light is deliverance from darkness. The public ministry of Jesus in John 1–12 begins and concludes with a promise of deliverance from darkness. The breadth of this offer is indicated in the prologue where John says, “Life was the light of people” (1:4) and “The true light enlightens every person by his coming into the world (1:9).”⁴⁰⁴ The world is described as “darkness” (1:5), which we learn in 3:19–21, 8:12, and 12:35–36 is that from which humanity is delivered by the light. That is, the possibility to have life was extended to all people who would believe in the light (1:7, 11–12) because the light possesses the ability to give life.⁴⁰⁵ At the conclusion of Jesus’ public ministry, John presents Jesus articulating that anyone who continually believes (ὁ πιστεύων)⁴⁰⁶ in Jesus as the light will not remain in the darkness (ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ μὴ μείνῃ, 12:46). The verb “remain” (μένω) appears in GJohn to describe the intimacy and permanency of

dualism (Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:247–49), or as an ethical dualism (Ashton, *Understanding*, 389–95). Elsewhere Bultmann has affirmed Gnostic metaphysical dualism in John 8:12. Bultmann, *John*, 342 fn. 5.

⁴⁰⁰ Bennema, “Johannine Epistemology,” 124.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 111–13.

⁴⁰² Bultmann, *John*, 43; Bultmann, “ζάω,” 2:871.

⁴⁰³ Bennema, “Johannine Epistemology,” 129.

⁴⁰⁴ For various meanings of ὁ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον, see Harris, *John*, 29. Since 1:10–13 affirms that not everyone accepts and believes in him, “every person,” refers to every individual without distinction not without exception.

⁴⁰⁵ Harris notes that since ἡ ζωή and τὸ φῶς are both articular and are joined by ἤν, it is a reciprocating proposition. Ibid., 23.

⁴⁰⁶ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 620–21. See footnote 392.

the relationship between Jesus and God (e.g., 14:10; 15:10) and the intimacy and permanency of the relationship between the disciples and Jesus, the Spirit, and the Father (e.g., 14:17–23; 15:1–11). By analogy, then, in 12:46, not to remain in darkness (μὴ μένῃ) is to have the relationship with darkness permanently severed.⁴⁰⁷ The manifestation of deliverance from darkness is captured in 8:12 and 12:35–36 in the promise for the believer not to walk in darkness.

The second benefit of possessing the light of life is the guidance by the light in the divine family. In 8:12, Jesus declares, “I am the light of the world. He who follows me, will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” Van der Watt limits the expression “the light of life” to the ethical overtones in relation to how an individual operates within the family of God. He suggests that since Jesus personifies light, this makes Jesus the example of divine life to people.⁴⁰⁸ Van der Watt writes, “To have Jesus as light means to know how to live (act and relate) as child of God when you have eternal life. He becomes the example of how to live the life which God gives....the light does not give life, but serves as light for those who belong to God.”⁴⁰⁹ His argument is based on reading the genitive τῆς ζωῆς in 8:12 epexegetically, which renders the meaning, “light as belonging to the life, that is it shines where life is.”⁴¹⁰ However, the majority of the commentators take the genitive τῆς ζωῆς as an objective genitive, which suggests that light produces life.⁴¹¹ Van der Watt’s restriction of “the light” to ethical conduct within the family of God fuses the light’s role in exposing darkness in the world (3:19–21) with the light’s function in

⁴⁰⁷ See §2.2.2.2b above for my treatment of the use of μένω in 3:36, in reference to the wrath of God that permanently remains on the unbeliever.

⁴⁰⁸ Van der Watt, *Family*, 236.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 238, 239.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 238. While Van der Watt prefers the epexegetical genitive, he nonetheless concedes the reading of the objective genitive, when he writes, “it does, however, seem preferable to understand Jesus as the Light, referring to the one who gives life” and the one who makes it possible for people not to dwell in darkness. Ibid., 250, 254–56.

⁴¹¹ So Brown, *John*, 344; Bultmann, *John*, 342 fn. 5; Carson, *John*, 338; Harris, *John*, 168; Thompson, *John*, 183; Herman C. Waetjen, *The Gospel of the Beloved Disciple* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 236. Westcott however points to the other two sayings, “water of life” and “bread of life,” to argue that all three should be understood with the dual meaning of springing from life and issuing life. Westcott, *John*, 129.

guiding the children of God in the right path.⁴¹² But John presents Jesus as the locus of the light because he acts as the judge who pierces into darkness and separates individuals into those who belong to the light and those who remain in the darkness (1:5; 3:18–21).⁴¹³ Only after deliverance from darkness is an individual able to *follow* the light. Van der Watt affirms that membership in the family of God occurs through birth from above;⁴¹⁴ however, he seems to reverse the process when he writes, “Those who accept Jesus as example of the divine life (or metaphorically stated as light), will become children of God by birth.”⁴¹⁵ I propose that John presents Jesus as light in two roles—as the source of light who delivers people from darkness, and as the guide who shines for the delivered persons to walk ethically within God’s family.⁴¹⁶ This interpretation reinforces the promise of deliverance from darkness and introduces the ethical component of walking in the light.

John presents the ethical meaning of “the light of life” through the verb *περιπατέω*. In 12:35–36, the present tense command *περιπατεῖτε* results in avoidance of darkness and in knowledge of the way (see 11:9–10).⁴¹⁷ The term *περιπατέω* contains an ethical dimension that is expected of the sons of the light as they adopt the quality of the light (e.g., Matt 5:14–16; Eph 5:8–9).⁴¹⁸ Walking in the light produces works (3:21) that indicate the qualitative resemblance to the God of light (Ps 18:28; 36:6; 89:15; 1 John 1:5). The way to walk continually in the light is to follow Jesus who is the light (8:12).

Jesus’ offer to deliver people from darkness and to lead them by light ends with his departure. The call to believe in (12:36, 46), walk in (8:12; 12:35), and follow (8:12) the light ceases with Jesus’ departure from public ministry, which is why the invitation to walk in the light is only found in John 1–12. Jesus forewarned

⁴¹² Van der Watt barely discusses the notion of light exposing darkness in the world; instead, he conflates it with the ethical movement of the children of God within the divine family. Van der Watt, *Family*, 251.

⁴¹³ So Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 191.

⁴¹⁴ Van der Watt, *Family*, 244.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁴¹⁶ Van der Watt seemingly arrives at the same conclusion when he says that these two positions are two sides of the same coin; however, his overall argument is to see the light of life as being a reference to Jesus’ ethical *modus operandi* within the divine family. *Ibid.*, 249–50, 259.

⁴¹⁷ Moloney, *John*, 355.

his disciples and the crowds about his departure which, on the one hand, would bring to an end his offer to serve as the light (7:33; 8:21; 9:4–5; 11:9–10; 12:36),⁴¹⁹ and, on the other, which would commence the judgment of the world through Jesus’ crucifixion (12:31).⁴²⁰ The conclusion to John 1–12 is not condemnation but a call to follow the light to become sons of the light (12:36). Thus, the command to believe continually in Jesus (πιστεύετε in 12:36) is coupled with the promise that the believer will be led by the light, that is, the promise of understanding where one is going (12:35–36).

Regarding the claim of the thesis that benefits are extended to encourage belief, John features the response of “the Jews” (12:37–43) in between Jesus’ final two public exhortations to believe (vv. 35–36 and vv. 44–50). Here John provides two reasons as to why the Jewish leaders refused to believe in Jesus (note the imperfect ἐπίστευον in 12:37)⁴²¹—fulfillment of Isaiah’s prediction of the hardness of their hearts and fear that the Pharisees would expel the believers from the synagogue (see chapter 5 for full treatment of expulsion from the synagogues). In 12:36, the reward for believing in the light is to become *sons* of the light, which further reiterates the promise of membership in the divine family. In 12:46, belief is rewarded with separation from darkness, avoidance of judgment (vv. 47–48), and eternal life (v. 50). Thus I suggest that John strategically places the inappropriate response from “the Jews” in between two appeals by Jesus to believe in him continuously (note the present tense of πιστεύετε in vv. 36, 44, 46) and to hear, receive, and obey his teaching (vv. 47, 48) in order to promote true discipleship that leads to confession of Jesus as Messiah, even at the cost of social respectability (12:42–43).

⁴¹⁸ Barrett, *John*, 429.

⁴¹⁹ Jesus had previously hidden himself to avoid arrest (4:3; 10:39–40) and death (7:1; 8:59; 10:53–54), but in 12:36 he disappears and focuses on his disciples until he reappears in the Garden of Gethsemane to initiate the judgment of the world and its ruler (12:31).

⁴²⁰ Dodd, *Interpretation*, 211.

⁴²¹ The imperfect may be durative which could be used by John to suggest obstinacy to continuous belief in Jesus. In light of the triple use of the present tense in vv. 36, 44, 46, it is plausible to understand the imperfect as John’s attempt to expose “the Jews’” refusal to fully commit to Jesus (v. 42). See Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert Walter Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New*

While the light is available only for a limited time, the promise to be led by the light for those who believe in the light extends into the future. This is reinforced by the grammar in 8:12. The association of τὸ φῶς with τῆς ζωῆς suggests continual protection from darkness because ζωὴ implies eschatological existence (e.g., 5:29; 10:28).⁴²² The promise to have the light of life and avoid darkness is stressed by the emphatic use of οὐ μὴ with the aorist subjunctive περιπατήσῃ in 8:12⁴²³ as it is contrasted with the emphatic ἀλλά with the future indicative ἔξει. Schnackenburg observes that the future contains the language of immediate promise that never ends (ἀλλ' ἔξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς).⁴²⁴ This promise is only conferred on the believer who continually follows Jesus (note the present participle in 8:12, ὁ ἀκολουθῶν) because the benefit to the follower is perpetual existence in the light. Schnackenburg captures the duration of the promise as follows:

The activity of the Logos as 'light' begins with creation and extends by means of the Incarnation to the eschatological fulfillment. Indeed, from the very beginning, it is aimed at bringing men home to God's world of light.⁴²⁵

John promotes belief in Jesus as the light by portraying Jesus as declaring on two occasions that he is the light and both are in the context of following Jesus. In the first case, when Jesus declares that he is the light in 8:12, certain "Jews" initially responded by believing in Jesus (8:30), though subsequently they turn on Jesus and attempt to kill him (8:59). If we understand 8:12–59 as a single unit⁴²⁶ spoken by Jesus at Sukkot, then the initial belief and the latter attempt to murder Jesus are

Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961), §327; Harris, *John*, 237; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:413.

⁴²² Bultmann, *John*, 42 and Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:244 who also point to the OT for light as part of eschatological salvation in Amos 5:18, 20; Mic 7:8; Hab 3:4; Isa 2:5; 9:1; 51:5 (LXX Isa 58:8, 10; 60:1–3, 19–20; 61:1); Bar 5:9.

⁴²³ Thompson similarly observes the emphatic promise. Thompson, *John*, 183 fn. 164.

⁴²⁴ See also 4:14; 6:35; 11:25; 12:25. Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:191. It is possible to take the genitive τῆς ζωῆς in 8:12 as a reference to eschatology since ζωὴ carries a futuristic component, thus the meaning would refer to arriving at the life/kingdom of light. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 128; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:191. In addition to the present benefits of walking in the light (e.g., not stumbling), there is an eschatological deliverance from God's final judgment that is promised (e.g., 5:29; 12:48). In the OT, God's judgment is designated as the day of darkness (Amos 5:18, 20; Joel 2:2; Zeph 1:15).

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 1:244.

responses to all that John portrays Jesus teaching at the festival. During the lighting ceremony that was held at the end of the first day of the feast in the court of the women, commemorating the pillar of fire during the Exodus event (Exod 13:21), the Johannine Jesus declared that he was the light of the world (8:12).⁴²⁷ The image of light played a significant role in the festival of Sukkot; indeed, as the Mishnah describes, when the candles were lit, “There was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illuminated with the light of the *Beis HaSho’evah*.”⁴²⁸ Jesus’ announcement evidently presented Jesus as the fulfillment of the OT symbolism of the light, for, as Thompson remarks, “Now the light emanating from the temple, for all the world, is Jesus himself.”⁴²⁹ It is to this declaration that “the Jews” initially respond with belief (8:30–31), but ultimately with aggression (8:59).

In the second instance (9:1–41), John weaves in the story of the blind man to illustrate Jesus’ pronouncement in 8:12 of being the light of the world. John features the story of the blind man in the subsequent narrative to teach that everyone is born blind (9:2–3) and needs to be delivered from darkness into light through an encounter with Jesus (9:5–7). Refusal to come to Jesus as the light (8:12) and acknowledge blindness prolongs the blindness and guilt (9:39–41).⁴³⁰ Those who believe are

⁴²⁶ Most scholars see 8:12–59 as a single unit with sub-units from the events at Sukkot. See Barrett, *John*, 333; Carson, *John*, 337; Ridderbos, *John*, 291; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:187; Smith, *John*, 178.

⁴²⁷ There are no Jewish sources predating GJohn that refer to this ceremony. Moreover, the ceremony occurred on the first day of Sukkot, whereas Jesus’ declaration, “I am the light of the world,” is placed after the last day of the feast (7:37). Thus, Poirier connects 8:12 to the Feast of Dedication in 10:22. See John C. Poirier, “Hanukkah in the Narrative Chronology of the Fourth Gospel,” *NTS* 54 (2008): 465–78; Thompson, *John*, 183 fn. 167. Dodd, defends the unity of John 7–8 by appealing to *κρυπτῶ* in 7:4 and 8:59 which unifies the narrative. Dodd, *Interpretation*, 348, 356.

⁴²⁸ *m. Sukkah IV 5:2–3*. As cited in Yisroel Gornish, *The Mishnah Volume 3: Rosh Hashanah, Yoma, Succah*, ed. Nosson Scherman and Meir Zlotowitz, 4 vols., AMS (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, Ltd, 1980). Although the Mishnah is commonly dated to 200 CE, it reflects the preceding Jewish tradition. Roger Brooks, “Mishnah,” *ABD*, 4:871–73. For a study on the background to the light imagery (i.e., primitive Christian, Jewish, or Hellenistic), refer to Barrett, *John*, 335–38; Keener, *John*, 381–87. For W/wisdom background to the light imagery, see Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:241–42; Scott, *Sophia*, 119–21; Willett, *Wisdom*, 88–95. For a summary of the light-darkness motif in the OT, see Elizabeth Achtemeier, “Jesus Christ, the Light of the Word: The Biblical Understanding of Light and Darkness,” *Int* 17 (1963): 439–49. In the OT, light describes God’s Word (Ps 19:8; 119:105, 130), God as the source of light (Job 33:28–30; Ps 18:28; 36:9; 118:27).

⁴²⁹ Thompson, *John*, 183. Thompson notes that Jesus enacts the role of the Servant of Isaiah as the light to the nations (Isa 42:6; 49:6).

⁴³⁰ Culpepper writes, “They have chosen to live in darkness because they love it (cf. 3:19)...they recognize their blindness, and their sin “remains.” Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 192. Resseguie approaches the response of the Jewish leaders to the blind man/Jesus from a psychological point of view and

promised to have their deeds exposed (3:19–21), to escape darkness and walk in perpetual light (3:19; 8:12; 12:35–36, 46), and to see the one (12:45; 14:7, 9) who was previously unseen (1:18).⁴³¹

While “the Jews” illustrate a negative response to Jesus’ declaration (8:59; 9:40–41), the blind man exemplifies the positive response that is affirmed through his confession (9:17) and worship of Jesus (9:35–38). The blind man confesses Jesus as a prophet (9:17) and as a messenger from God (vv. 31–33). Additionally, the double use of κύριε in 9:36–38 may demonstrate development in the blind man’s understanding of Jesus’ identity—from politely addressing Jesus as “sir” to acknowledging him as “Lord.”⁴³² Moreover, the association of worship with κύριε in verse 38 enriches both terms, possibly suggesting worship that is not mere homage to a human, but is, rather, similar to the OT worship that reflects an individual’s response to the revelation of God (e.g., Gen 17:3; Exod 34:6–8).⁴³³ Lincoln observes that the juxtaposition of προσκυνέω with κύριος is best understood in the strongest sense of the word, that is, that “the accompanying act makes his confession equivalent to the later one by Thomas—my Lord and my God (20:28).”⁴³⁴ The previous Johannine reference to worship appeared in John 4, in the pericope of the Samaritan woman, where worship was described in respect to a proper sphere (4:21) and according to the right knowledge (4:23). When we compare John’s description of Jesus’ response to the Samaritan woman’s and to the blind man’s inquiries of Jesus’ identity, Jesus’ response is very similar. To the Samaritan woman’s statement, “I know the Messiah is coming, who is called the Christ” (4:25), Jesus responds, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you” (Εγώ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι, 4:26). To the blind

argues that it demonstrates the Pharisees’ “descent into darkness.” Resseguie continues, “Blindness can be cured; refusal to see cannot.” Resseguie, *Strange*, 144.

⁴³¹ It is noteworthy that the first time the promise to see God is given in GJohn is in the context of believing in Jesus as the light in order to be freed from darkness (12:45) whereas up to that point, only Jesus was privileged to see the Father (1:18; 6:46; 8:38). Following Jesus as the light unveils the eyes of the believer to the unseen God in the face of Jesus (12:45; 14:7–11).

⁴³² Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 294. Similarly, Brown, *John*, 375; Carson, *John*, 376–77; Hunt et al., eds., *Character Studies*, 436; Lincoln, *John*, 286–87.

⁴³³ Barrett, *John*, 365; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 159–60; Brown, *John*, 376; Bultmann, *John*, 339, fn. 3; Köstenberger, *John*, 295; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2.254. The term προσκυνέω is used in John 4:20–24 and 12:20 to refer to the worship of God.

⁴³⁴ Lincoln, *John*, 287.

man's question, "Who is he?" (9:35–36), Jesus is portrayed as responding: "You have seen him, it is he who is speaking with you (καὶ ἑώρακας αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λαλῶν μετὰ σοῦ ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν, 9:37).⁴³⁵ In both instances, John seems to portray each individual as believing in Jesus in response to the benefit that was extended to them. In the case of the Samaritan woman, eternal life is the benefit under consideration (4:10, 14); while in the case of the blind man, sight is the benefit that he receives, both literally and spiritually, because of his belief in the light (9:36, 39–41).

In the blind man's question to Jesus (9:36), we can observe John's appeal to the reader to answer the same question with which the Pharisees and the blind man were faced—who is Jesus? (9:29–30, 33, 36; see also 8:25). The unbelief of the Pharisees/"the Jews" consigns them to ongoing blindness and judgment. John encourages a response comparable to that of the blind man inasmuch as he presents the benefits of deliverance from darkness and of the subsequent leading by the light that prevents stumbling (11:9–10).

2.2.2.3b Ζωή and Water

To enhance the value of ζωή for the reader, John deploys the image of the water (ὕδωρ)⁴³⁶ in juxtaposition with ζωή in two passages: 4:10–15 and 7:38–39.⁴³⁷ In 4:10, Jesus offers the living water (ὕδωρ ζῶν) to the Samaritan woman who eventually receives Jesus' message (vv. 29, 39–42). The expression ὕδωρ ζῶν in this narrative has generated some discussion among biblical interpreters as regards the meaning of this phrase. Bennema summarizes four possible referents for ὕδωρ ζῶν—life/eschatological salvation, cleansing/purification, the eschatological giving of the

⁴³⁵ Moloney observed this parallelism. Francis J. Moloney, *Signs and Shadows: Reading John 5–12* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1996), 128, fn. 44.

⁴³⁶ Barrett notes the value of water due to its scarcity to the ancient desert dweller. Barrett, *John*, 233.

⁴³⁷ The other metaphoric use of water in 3:5 is discussed in §2.2.1.1. Allison adds 6:35 as a reference to the water of life but as the primary focus of John 6 is the bread of life discourse, see §2.2.2.3c. Allison argues that these texts indicate realized eschatology of the OT promises of the Messiah, the temple and the Spirit, with parallel ideas to Rev 21:6; 22:1, 17. Dale C. Allison, "The Living Water (John 4:10–14; 6:35c, 7:37–39)," *SVTQ* 30 (1986): 143–57. Ng argues for a symbolic interpretation of Johannine references to water with multiple meanings, historical and theological, and with a double dimension, horizontal and vertical. Ng argues that in 4:1–42 and 7:37–39, "living

spirit, and divine W/wisdom/teaching.⁴³⁸ Van der Watt, on the other hand, stresses the satisfying effect of the water and the ongoing need for it; thus he argues that the living water and the spring is Jesus himself. Van der Watt writes, “The one who supplies water in the family of God is Jesus. He is the water and his presence becomes the well. In his presence the spiritual needs of the family are fulfilled for ever (sic).”⁴³⁹ However, Brown notes that Jesus could not be the water of life since he offers it.⁴⁴⁰ Bennema additionally observes that the chiasm in v. 10 equates the gift of God with the water of life and that Jesus is the focus of the chiasm as the giver of the water of life.⁴⁴¹ Brown suggests only two real options for the water of life in 4:10–15, that is, Jesus’ teaching or the Spirit, and in agreement with McCool,⁴⁴² Brown concludes that both options are in view.⁴⁴³ Although Bennema initially suggests that there is no need to choose between the four meanings for the water of life, his subsequent study in 4:10–14 and 7:37–39 reveals that he prefers two meanings—Jesus’ teaching and the Spirit.⁴⁴⁴ He defines the water of life as, “Jesus’ Spirit-imbued revelatory wisdom teaching that cleanses and purifies and leads to eternal life (salvation).”⁴⁴⁵ Thus, Bennema suggests that to drink the living water is to “receive the gift of saving wisdom mediated by the Spirit.”⁴⁴⁶ For the purposes of my thesis, I follow Brown and Bennema, that the water of life refers to Jesus’ revelation that conveys salvific content that leads to eternal life and the Spirit who collaborates with Jesus to confer eternal life (6:63).

water’ entails the ‘eschatological harvest.’” Wai-Yee Ng, *Water Symbolism in John: An Eschatological Interpretation* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), see esp. 3, 46–47, 75–81, 97–153, 194.

⁴³⁸ Bennema, *Power*, 183–87. Allison adds God and Torah as options with supporting Jewish texts. Allison, “Living Water,” 144–45.

⁴³⁹ Van der Watt, *Family*, 228–35, citing 233. Culpepper similarly sees Jesus as the water of life when he writes, “Living water therefore points to Jesus, the revelation, the new life. And the means by which one enters it, the Spirit.” Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 194.

⁴⁴⁰ Brown, *John*, 178.

⁴⁴¹ Bennema, *Power*, 182 fn. 81.

⁴⁴² F. J. McCool, “Living Water in John,” in *The Bible in Current Catholic Thought: In Honor of M. Gruenthaner*, ed. J. L. McKenzie (New York: Herder & Herder, 1962), 226–33.

⁴⁴³ Brown, *John*, 178–79. Zahn suggests it is Jesus or the Spirit. Theodor Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, KNT (Leipzig: Diechert, 1921), 237–38.

⁴⁴⁴ Bennema, *Power*, 186–87, 195. See also Willett, *Wisdom*, 94.

⁴⁴⁵ Bennema, *Power*, 185. Bultmann sees water as referring to revelation. Bultmann, *John*, 181. For the water metaphor in Jewish literature, see Barrett, *John*, 233–34.

⁴⁴⁶ Bennema, *Power*, 187.

The benefit of the water of life is made manifest in the exchange between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, specifically in the concern to discover the solution to quenching one's thirst (4:7–15). To show the benefit of Jesus' offer of living water, John moves from physical thirst (vv. 7, 15) to spiritual thirst that can be satiated by Jesus. The present tense participle ζῶν modifying ὕδωρ (vv. 10, 11) highlights the continual spiritual fulfillment that is gained from the living water and the inclusion of ζωὴν αἰώνιον (v. 14) affirms the permanency of the satisfaction in the present and into the eschatological future (note the present participle, ἀλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον in v. 14). Additionally, the fulfillment that a believer receives from Jesus' gift is stressed in the contrast between the need for continual drinking of physical water (πᾶς ὁ πίνων, note the present participle) with the gratification gained from a single drink of the living water, "whoever should drink...will never thirst (ὅς δ' ἂν πίη...οὐ μὴ διψήσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, note the aorist, πίη).⁴⁴⁷ That is, God's gift of living water as conferred by Jesus⁴⁴⁸ through his teaching (6:63b) and the Spirit's application of that teaching (6:63a) permanently satisfies spiritual thirst.⁴⁴⁹

Initially, Jesus' offer of ὕδωρ ζῶν is misunderstood⁴⁵⁰ by the Samaritan woman, but ultimately the woman grasps Jesus' message. At first, the Samaritan woman responds to Jesus' remarks about ὕδωρ ζῶν by expressing a desire to quench her thirst permanently and to stop coming to the well altogether to draw water for herself (v. 15, note the present tense διέρχωμαι). However, after Jesus demonstrates that he has super-natural knowledge of her life, after he explains to her the meaning of true worship, and after he announces to her that he is the Messiah,⁴⁵¹ she

⁴⁴⁷ Barrett, *John*, 234.

⁴⁴⁸ Bennema, *Power*, 182 fn. 81.

⁴⁴⁹ Van der Watt, *Family*, 231–32.

⁴⁵⁰ For misunderstanding in GJohn, see D. A. Carson, "Understanding Misunderstandings in the Fourth Gospel," *TynBul* 33 (1982): 59–91. Farely notes that misunderstanding in GJohn sometimes stems from unbelief, while at other times misunderstanding represents faith's desire to understand. Moreover, Farely observes that the rhetorical effect of misunderstanding on the implied readers is a reminder that discipleship is a process of growth as the disciples develop as witnesses for Jesus. Farely, *Disciples*, 179–84, 227.

⁴⁵¹ So Bennema, *Power*, 188; Bultmann, *John*, 192; Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:442. Contra Barrett, *John*, 239, 291–92, 342. For discussion on Jesus' use of Ἐγώ εἰμι see Brown, *John*, 537; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:79–89; Thompson, *John*, 156–60. The Ἐγώ εἰμι formula is probably derived

understands the meaning of the water to which Jesus was referring. That she finally understands Jesus' words is made evident in her abandonment of the water jar (v. 28),⁴⁵² her confession of Jesus' messiahship (vv. 29, 42),⁴⁵³ and her participation in Jesus' mission as a witness (vv. 28–30, 38b–42).⁴⁵⁴ She becomes a positive example of what Jesus challenges his disciples to do (vv. 31–38), that is, to engage in his mission, and in this way she models “faithful discipleship.”⁴⁵⁵ In the story of the Samaritan woman, we detect the promise of the benefit of life in exchange for belief in Jesus as Messiah and discipleship. Moreover, in order to witness to her villagers (note *μαρτυρούσης*, v. 39) the Samaritan woman overcame two aspects of adversity:

from the LXX statements of divine announcements in Isa 41:1; 43:10, 25; 45:18–19; 46:4; 51:12; 52:6. So Brown, *John*, 533–38; Culy, *Echoes*, 113–17; Lincoln, *John*, 178; Thompson, *John*, 160. Note the linguistic similarity between Isa 52:6 (LXX) and John 4:27:

Isa 52:6—ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι αὐτὸς ὁ λαλῶν

John 4:26—Ἐγὼ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι

⁴⁵² Many scholars see her leaving behind the jar as evidence of satiation with the living water. Beck, *Discipleship*, 75; Bennema, *Power*, 189–90; Carson, *John*, 227; Mary L. Coloe, “The Woman of Samaria: Her Characterization, Narrative, and Theological Significance,” in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013), 192; Keener, *John*, 621. Others understand this gesture as indicative of her eagerness to inform the villagers of Jesus' presence and identity, which is supported by the urgency in her tone as indicated by the grammar in v. 29, δεῦτε ἴδετε ἄνθρωπον. Haenchen et al., *John*, 1:224; Lincoln, *John*, 179. Or perhaps she intended to return to Jesus, Beasley-Murray, *John*, 63; J. H. Bernard and A. H. McNeile, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, 2 vols., ICC (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1929), 152; Lincoln, *John*, 179. Resseguie provides the narrative point of view of her decision to leave the water jar and suggests that the Samaritan woman understands that the “living water” requires a new jar, herself. Resseguie, *Strange*, 79–80.

⁴⁵³ Bennema is right to suppose that the villagers' confession includes hers. See Bennema, *Power*, 190–91, esp. fn. 123. Her statement to the villagers in the interrogative, μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός, can be viewed positively, for example: “That must be the Messiah at last, perhaps this is the Messiah.” Blass et al., *Greek Grammar*, §427.2. See also Beirne, *Women and Men*, 90–91. Cf., Robert Gordon Maccini, *Her Testimony is True: Women as Witnesses According to John*, JSNTSup 125 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 121.

⁴⁵⁴ O'Grady and Reinhartz call the Samaritan woman a missionary. Chennattu and Raymond Brown attribute to her an apostolic function as a witness in GJohn. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 188; Rekha M. Chennattu, “Les femmes dans la mission de l'église: interprétation de Jean 4,” *BLE* 108 no. 3 (2007): 382, 384, 392; John F. O'Grady, *According to John: The Witness of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 25; Adele Reinhartz, “Women in the Johannine Community: An Exercise in Historical Imagination,” in *A Feminist Companion to John*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 21.

⁴⁵⁵ Beirne, *Women and Men*, 92; Bennema, *Power*, 190–91; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 91; Chennattu, “Les femmes,” 385; Hylan, *Imperfect*, citing 55. Chennattu recognizes her discipleship efforts when she writes, “C'est pourquoi la reconnaissance des Samaritains au verset 42 ne dévalue pas le témoignage de cette femme, mais le confirme. L'effet transformant de son ministère apostolique est marqué par la réponse unanime des habitants de Sychar.” Chennattu, “Les femmes,” 392. Note, “come and see” in v. 29 which recalls 1:39, 46. See Maccini, *Her Testimony*, 129–31.

the stigma of confessing her moral failures (v. 39)⁴⁵⁶ and the stigma for talking to a Jewish man.⁴⁵⁷ Thus, I suggest that John inserts the story of the Samaritan woman into the narrative not only to present Jesus as the international savior (v. 42),⁴⁵⁸ but also to demonstrate that the benefit of eternal life may motivate an individual to follow Jesus even in the face of the possibility of adverse social consequences that the Samaritan woman could have endured for speaking with a Jewish man.⁴⁵⁹

John 7:37–39 is the second passage that refers to the water of life where the benefit of the water of life for the believer is mediated through the work of the Spirit. Sukkot is the setting for Jesus’ declaration, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from his inner part” (7:37–38).⁴⁶⁰ Many have argued for the christological interpretation of this passage, that is, that Jesus is depicted as the new temple from whom the waters will flow. Thus, from the perspective of this christological interpretation, the OT eschatological promises are fulfilled in Jesus (Ezek 47:1–12).⁴⁶¹ Others see the believer as the source of the living water since Jesus has

⁴⁵⁶ For the social stigma related to her marital life, see Barrett, *John*, 235; Bennema, *Power*, 182; Harris, *John*, 92; Thompson, *John*, 102–103.

⁴⁵⁷ In v. 27, the disciples’ amazement that Jesus was speaking to a Samaritan woman is highlighted with the emphatic placement of the imperfect ἐθαύμαζον before ὅτι μετὰ γυναικὸς ἐλάλει. Likewise, the Samaritan woman herself was astounded that Jesus as a Jew would speak to her (v. 9). See Barrett, *John*, 232–33; Keener, *John*, 585. On the impropriety of a private conversation between a man and a woman, see Mishnah: *Pirke Aboth* 1.5; *Qidd* 4.12; Babylonian Talmud: *Ber* 43b; *Eruv* 53b; *Kidd* 70a, b; 81a. Although the Mishnah is traditionally dated to third century CE and the Talmud to fifth/sixth century CE, the oral tradition contained in both works most likely predates GJohn. Consequently, it is reasonable to suppose that the material on the interaction between men and women reflects the thinking of the first century Jew and is therefore relevant to the current study in John 4. Brooks, “Mishnah,” 871–73; Gary G. Porton, “Talmud,” *ABD*, 310–15.

⁴⁵⁸ Contra Bultmann who writes, “[the evangelist] has no special interest in the figure of the woman herself...the details which he adds about the woman serve only to bring the Samaritans to Jesus.” Bultmann, *John*, 193.

⁴⁵⁹ For Jewish-Samaritan tension, see Keener, *John*, 587–601.

⁴⁶⁰ For a description of the water libation ceremony at Sukkot, see *m. Sukkah* 4.1, 9–10. The major commentaries take Sukkot as the setting. See *ibid.*, 703.

⁴⁶¹ Barrett, *John*, 328; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 115–17; Brown, *John*, 320–24; Bultmann, *John*, 304–305; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 314–16; Kee, “Knowing,” 260; Keener, *John*, 728–30; Joel Marcus, “Rivers of Living Water from Jesus’ Belly John 7:38,” *JBL* 117 (1998): 328–30; Moloney, *John*, 252–53; Ng, *Water Symbolism*, 75–81; Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, *The History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods*, *BJS* 302 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 90; Van der Watt, *Family*, 234.

granted life to the individual who now becomes that source of living water.⁴⁶² The cause for this disagreement lies in three areas. First, the antecedent of αὐτοῦ in verse 38 is left unspecified, that is, as to whether it is ὁ πιστεύων or ἐμέ. Second, it is unclear if the citation in verse 38, ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ῥέουσιν ὕδατος ζῶντος, is part of Jesus' words in verse 37 or the narrator's commentary. Third, the citation in verse 38 does not correspond to any particular OT text. Thus, to explain the OT allusion, scholars have relied on texts that portray water flowing either from the eschatological Jerusalem (Ezek 47:1–12; Zech 12:10; 13:1; 14:8; Joel 3:18) or from the rock in the wilderness that quenched Israel's thirst (Exod 17:6; Num 20:8–11; Ps 78:16, 20; 105:41; Isa 48:21; Neh 9:15, 20; 1 Cor 10:4). Moreover, there is no clear OT text that contains the statement “rivers of living water”; nor is there a text that portrays water flowing from an individual.⁴⁶³ Thus, grammar and the OT texts do not settle the matter with any certainty.⁴⁶⁴

Arguably, John permits both options: to view Jesus as the source of water and to see the believer as the source of water. On the one hand, Jesus is consistently portrayed in GJohn as the source of eternal life (10:10, 28); on the other hand the Spirit (15:26; 16:7; 20:22) joins the process of conferring life upon the believer as well (6:63). The believer is said to possess eternal life (11:25) and the Spirit (14:16–17) permanently.⁴⁶⁵ Thus, John presents Jesus as the source/spring (=κοιλία) from whom the Spirit (=rivers of living water or the stream) will flow to the believer, who, in turn, will become a “derivative source”⁴⁶⁶ of the Spirit for other people.

⁴⁶² Baffes, “Christology,” 144–50; Barrett, *John*, 328; Bennema, *Power*, 193–95; Thompson, *John*, 175–76; Van der Watt, *Family*, 234.

⁴⁶³ The summary of these questions of the text is adopted from Thompson, *John*, 175. For a discussion of the grammatical disagreements in the text, see Bennema, *Power*, 192–95; Brown, *John*, 320–24; Ng, *Water Symbolism*, 75–81. The following texts are candidates for the river of water flowing from an individual: Prov 13:14, 25; Sir 24:30–31; 39:6.

⁴⁶⁴ Brown, *John*, 321; Ng, *Water Symbolism*, 79–80.

⁴⁶⁵ Bennema discusses the predicament concerning the Spirit's work before and after Jesus' crucifixion in light of 7:39. I concur with his conclusion that the Spirit was not yet active in the same extent/way that he would be after Jesus' crucifixion, but was active in a salvific manner prior to the cross (e.g., 3:5–6; 6:63). Pace, Wes Howard-Brook, *Becoming Children of God: John's Gospel and Radical Discipleship* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1994), 325; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:157.

⁴⁶⁶ Bennema, *Power*, 195. See also Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 194.

In this context, Jesus' invitation to continuous commitment to him is conveyed through the present tense participles *ὁ πιστεύων* (v. 38) and *οἱ πιστεύσαντες* (v. 39), which result in the benefits of possessing the Spirit and having one's thirst assuaged. These benefits are extended by Jesus to individuals who are incarcerated by fear of "the Jews," such that the crowd would not even mention Jesus' name (7:13). In the end, the benefits of the relief of thirst, eternal life, and possession of the Spirit should encourage the readers of GJohn to come, drink, and believe (*ἐρχέσθω, πινέτω, ὁ πιστεύων*, 7:37–39) in Jesus even if one is dominated by fear because of potential arrest (7:30, 45) or death (7:1, 20, 25).⁴⁶⁷

2.2.2.3c Ζωή and Bread

In the narrative on the bread of life, John depicts Jesus presenting himself as the bread of life in whom one can find permanent satiation. The imagery of the bread of life⁴⁶⁸ follows the narrative of Jesus' sign of the feeding of five-thousand (6:1–14, 25–34; Matt 14:13–21; Mark 6:32–44; Luke 9:10–17).⁴⁶⁹ The crowd responds to the

⁴⁶⁷ Although the descriptions of hostility refer to Jesus, the comment in 7:13 would be gratuitous unless the crowd sincerely believed there was danger involved in following Jesus. The same hesitancy to commit to Jesus is displayed by common individuals (9:22), the Jewish leaders (12:42), and the disciples (20:19). Thus, the threat was real not only to Jesus but also for anyone who publicly associated with him. See chapter 5 for further discussion on the evidence of hostility in GJohn.

⁴⁶⁸ See Borgen's seminal study, *Bread from Heaven*, where he examines John 6 in light of Philo and Jewish midrashim, especially Merkabah mysticism, haggadic and halakhic traditions that shaped Johannine thought. Borgen argues for the giving of the law at Sinai as a model for the bread from heaven discourse in GJohn. Borgen, *Bread*, 147–92. Painter in Culpepper's work provides a source-critical and narrative-critical study of John 6 in light of the Synoptic accounts and shows the development of John 6 through various editions. John Painter, "Jesus and the Quest for Eternal Life," in *Critical Readings of John 6*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 61–94. Ford observes feminine aspects of God's redemption and nourishment of his people through the image of W/wisdom's feast in John 6. Ford argues that John 6:56 refers to lactation, a scene in which God/Christ feeds "his children from his breasts." Ford relies on the Hellenistic texts concerning W/wisdom as the nurturing mother and on the cult of Isis for her interpretation of John 6. Ford, *Redeemer-Friend*, 124–35, citing 133.

⁴⁶⁹ Many scholars interpret the bread of heaven discourse with eucharistic implications. Moloney argues that in the Eucharist a person encounters eternal life, and depending on his response, he will gain or lose eternal life. Moloney, *John*, 207, 223–24. See also Maarten J. J. Menken, "John 6:51c–58: Eucharist or Christology," in *Critical Readings of John 6*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 183 fn. 3; P.J. Temple, "The Eucharist in St. John 6," *CBQ* 9 (1947): 442–52. McGrath critiques the eucharistic interpretation, arguing that the focus of John 6 is that Jesus is the bread of life not the Christian Eucharist. James F. McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology: Legitimation and Development in Johannine Christology*, SNTSMS 111 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 172–82. For a critique of the eucharistic view but with allowance for an allusion to the early

sign of the miracle of the bread by seeking Jesus for perpetual free bread (vv. 22–26). However, John portrays Jesus as redirecting the discussion from physical bread to himself, the bread from heaven, who provides true satisfaction by granting eternal life (vv. 27–33).

Bennema understands the bread of life as Jesus' personification of W/wisdom incarnate who came down from heaven to offer eternal life.⁴⁷⁰ He traces the development in the Jewish understanding of manna from God's provision in the wilderness, to the Torah, to W/wisdom from God inviting all to come to her banquet, to now Jesus claiming the imagery for himself as the satisfying bread sent by God.⁴⁷¹ Adopting Bennema's proposal,⁴⁷² I focus on Jesus' invitation to come and feast on him as the eternally satisfying manna. In light of the conclusion to the narrative featuring two responses to Jesus' teaching, either defection⁴⁷³ or devotion (vv. 66–68),⁴⁷⁴ I draw attention to the benefits of continuous discipleship⁴⁷⁵ and how they prompt devotion to Jesus. In other words, John depicts Jesus as promising satisfaction from eating the true bread (vv. 35, 55–56), eternal life (vv. 27, 33, 35, 40, 47, 50–51, 53, 54, 57, 58, 63, 68), and resurrection (vv. 39, 40, 44, 54), and this in effect serves to persuade John's readers to continuous discipleship in contrast with the defectors (6:60–67). John also emphasizes discipleship in this context through the

church practice of the sacrament, see Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6*, WUNT 2.78 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 110–36, 254; Barrett, *John*, 284, 297; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 95; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 197; Dunn, "John VI," 328–38; Feuillet, *Études*, 47–129; Painter, "Eternal Life," 88; Dorothy A. Lee, *The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel: The Interplay of Form and Meaning*, JSNTSup 95 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 152; Menken, "John 6:51c–58," 183–204; Thompson, *John*, 149. Cf., Bauckham and Bennema who reject eucharistic overtones, Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2015), 18; Bennema, *Power*, 200 fn. 171.

⁴⁷⁰ Bennema, *Power*, 196–208.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 196–99.

⁴⁷² Feuillet similarly follows the sapiential interpretation. Feuillet, *Études*, 72–99.

⁴⁷³ Painter sees the division of Jewish Christians from the synagogue in 6:60–66. Painter, "Eternal Life," 89–90, 92–94. See also Menken, "John 6:51c–58," 202.

⁴⁷⁴ Painter suggests that the association of Judas with the twelve (v. 71) casts a shadow on the loyalty of the twelve (vv. 67, 70) and Peter's confession (vv. 68–69). However, John is not contrasting Judas with the Twelve or with Peter but he contrasts the disciples who walked away with the faithful twelve through the imagery of walking with Jesus (vv. 66–67 versus v. 68) and believing in Jesus (v. 64 versus v. 69). Moreover, Judas was previously included with the faithless defectors (v. 64), thus the contrast is best seen as the defectors and Judas versus Peter with the remaining ten disciples. Painter, "Eternal Life," 90–91.

⁴⁷⁵ Note the present tense of πιστεύω, vv. 29, 35, 36, 40, 47, 64 and ὁ τρώγων v. 57.

repeated use of πιστεύω (vv. 29, 30, 35, 36, 40, 47, 64, 69) and the accompanying imagery of coming (vv. 35, 37, 44, 45, 65), seeing (vv. 30, 36, 40, 62), eating (vv. 50, 51, 53–58),⁴⁷⁶ drinking (vv. 53–56), and walking with Jesus (v. 66).⁴⁷⁷ Inasmuch as the benefits of eternal life and resurrection have been aptly discussed above, here I examine the theme of satisfaction gained from eating the true bread.

Similar to the discourse with the Samaritan woman where Jesus is portrayed as contrasting the physical water with living water, in 6:22–71 Jesus demonstrates the eternal gratification a believer experiences from consuming the bread of life. Van der Watt’s reminder of the difficulty in earning bread and the negativity toward hunger in the ancient society gives the metaphor of the bread of life more potency.⁴⁷⁸ Jesus contrasts perishable nourishment with eternal satisfaction from the bread of life. The former is gained through physical labor (v. 27) whereas the latter through belief in Jesus (v. 29); and the former results in death (v. 49) while the latter in resurrection (v. 54). The adjective “true” (v. 32) contrasts the OT provision of manna with Jesus being the *true* bread who sustains life.⁴⁷⁹ The crux of the discussion is satiation of hunger, and Jesus is depicted as the bread that continually satisfies.⁴⁸⁰ Life, in other words, is found only in “feeding” on Jesus.⁴⁸¹ The metaphorical interpretation of eating and drinking is evident in 6:55–56 where the verb μένω⁴⁸² is used to explain the eating of the flesh and drinking of the blood of Jesus as confirmation of possessing a relationship with Jesus through his death (v. 51).⁴⁸³ Subsequently, in verse 57, Jesus identifies the origin of his life and his ability to grant life to others as being in the living Father. The present participle ὁ ζῶν modifying πατήρ signifies the perpetual existence of God and, by derivation (5:26), the perpetual existence of Jesus who is the Logos (1:1–4). With the reference to the

⁴⁷⁶ The verbs φαγεῖν (vv. 23, 26, 39, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 58) and τρώγω (vv. 54, 56, 57, 58) are used interchangeably. Menken, “John 6:51c–58,” 196.

⁴⁷⁷ Painter similarly sees the theme of discipleship in these images. Painter, “Eternal Life,” 88, 93.

⁴⁷⁸ Van der Watt, *Family*, 217–20.

⁴⁷⁹ Feuillet, *Études*, 48.

⁴⁸⁰ Van der Watt, *Family*, 222–23.

⁴⁸¹ Lee, *Symbolic*, 127.

⁴⁸² See chapter 4 for full treatment of μένω in GJohn.

⁴⁸³ Bennema, *Power*, 200–202; Menken, “John 6:51c–58,” 194.

living Father (ὁ ζῶν πατήρ) providing for and sustaining the life of Jesus (5:26)⁴⁸⁴— who, in turn, confers ζωή upon those who continually abide in him, and who thus delivers them from death (=separation from God as Father, v. 50) and promises future resurrection (v. 54)—John brings us into the metaphor of the divine family. This work of conferring life is possible only with the cooperating work of the words of Jesus and the Spirit, because flesh is impotent in spiritual matters (3:6; 6:63).⁴⁸⁵ Feuillet captured the essence of this entire narrative well:

Si Jésus a fait le miracle des pains, réplique de la manne, c’est pour suggérer que sa parole, ses enseignements sont une nourriture à la condition qu’on y adhère par la foi; mieux encore que lui-même, appelé dans le prologue Parole de Dieu, est le vrai pain venu du ciel.⁴⁸⁶

Thus, the portrayal of Jesus as the bread of life appears in GJohn as a benefit within the context of locutions that bear overtones of the divine family.

Moreover, the narrative in John 6 provides an antidote to defection. For the readers of John, the conclusion of the narrative in verses 60–71 creates a fork in the road with two contrasting disciples as potential models to imitate—Judas who represents defectors and Peter who represents the followers of Jesus. As a response to the desertion of some of his disciples, Jesus asks the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” Peter’s response is: “Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have believed and we have come to know that you are the Holy One of God,” and this response communicates the message that to follow Jesus is to receive eternal life. This response, then, arguably functions in this narrative to motivate commitment to Jesus because of the benefit of eternal life. While Farelly rightly notes that Peter does not repeat any of the terms used as designations for

⁴⁸⁴ Harris sees διὰ in καὶ γὰρ ζῶ διὰ τὸν πατέρα as affirming the cause/source of Jesus’ life being the Father. Harris, *John*, 142. Also Barrett, *John*, 300; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 95; Brown, *John*, 283. Cf. Westcott who takes the Father as the object of Jesus’ life. Westcott, *John*, 108.

⁴⁸⁵ There are two primary interpretations of σὰρξ in 6:63, anthropological or christological. For christological, see Bennema, *Power*, 202–4; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:71–72. For anthropological, see Beasley-Murray, *John*, 96; Brown, *John*, 299–300; Harris, *John*, 146; Moloney, *John*, 231; Udo Schnelle, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1998), 139; Thompson, *John*, 162; Westcott, *John*, 109. For the ambiguous view of σὰρξ, see Barrett, *John*, 304; Bultmann, *John*, 446.

⁴⁸⁶ Feuillet, *Études*, 58.

Jesus in the immediate context (e.g., bread of life, Son of Man),⁴⁸⁷ Peter's reply nevertheless reaches back to the beginning of the discourse where Jesus claimed to be sent by God (v. 29) and sealed by God (v. 27). Jesus' origin from God was the repeated claim of which he hoped to persuade his listeners (vv. 33, 38, 39, 41, 42, 44, 46, 50, 51, 57, 58), and this is precisely what Peter affirms with certainty:⁴⁸⁸ "You are the holy one of God" (v. 69).⁴⁸⁹ Peter's confession mirrors the confessions of Martha (11:27) and Thomas (20:28), both of whom are depicted as faithful followers of Jesus.⁴⁹⁰ John's readers can reach forward in the Gospel and recognize that Peter's discipleship will be flawed (18:15–18, 25–27).⁴⁹¹ Nonetheless, John's readers would also see that Peter reaffirms his commitment to his Lord and, as Chennattu remarks, Peter "never stops his journey with Jesus"⁴⁹² (21:15–22). In the bread of life narrative, John portrays Jesus as offering eternal life, satisfaction in him, and the promise of a future resurrection as benefits of continuous discipleship, so that the

⁴⁸⁷ Farelly, *Disciples*, 48.

⁴⁸⁸ The perfect verbs, *πεπιστεύκαμεν καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν*, signify existence of knowledge and faith that preceded the current scene and are confidently affirmed in the present. Farelly rightly notes that the perfect tense stresses the stative sense of the disciples' belief and knowledge in the present, in contrast with the defectors who abandon Jesus on account of "ongoing lack of understanding Jesus' teaching." Barrett, *John*, 306; Blass et al., *Greek Grammar*, §342; Farelly, *Disciples*, 47–48.

⁴⁸⁹ The variants are diverse, *ὁ Χριστός/ὁ Χριστός ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ/ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος*, seemingly in an attempt to harmonize with John 1:49; 11:27; and Mark 16:16. The best reading is *ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ* from \mathfrak{P}^{75} \aleph B C D L W. Metzger, *Commentary*, 184. Barrett observes that in GJohn, *ἅγιος* is distinctive and important since it is applied only to God (*πάτερ ἅγιε*, 17:11), the Spirit (1:33; 14:26; 20:22), Jesus (*ὁν ὁ πατὴρ ἡγάσεν*, 10:36; *ἐγὼ ἀγιάζω ἑμναυτόν*, 17:19) and the disciples (17:17, 19). Barrett posits that this title makes Jesus the "emissary of God; in Jewish terms the Messiah, the Holy One of God who comes from God and goes to God." Barrett, *John*, 307.

⁴⁹⁰ Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 145–50, 164–70.

⁴⁹¹ Resseguie interprets Peter as representing the material point of view because he confuses eagerness with discipleship. Resseguie suggests that John presents two Peters—eager and self-willed (13:36–37; 18:15–18, 25–27) versus the new Peter who follows the will of another, loves the shepherd, and cares for the sheep (21:15–19). However, Peter's eagerness to follow Jesus unto death (13:36–37) can be understood against the backdrop of 12:25–26 where Jesus describes a faithful servant as one who does not hold onto his life. Thus in 13:36–37, Peter is merely conveying his desire to fulfill Jesus' demands, even if he will not be perfect at it. Additionally, if we follow Resseguie's paradigm of two Peters, then even in the final mention of Peter in 21:20–22, he is portrayed as wavering as he looks back at the BD. Finally, by relegating Peter's positive traits to 21:15–19, Resseguie devalues Peter's confession in 6:68–69. Resseguie, *Strange*, 150–55.

⁴⁹² Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 100.

readers would emulate Peter,⁴⁹³ not Judas or other defectors, in their response to Jesus' call to follow him by consuming him as the bread of life.

2.2.2.4 Summary

John's description of how a disciple procures ζωή involves the activity and the teaching of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. In GJohn, God is a *living* God (5:21; 6:57) who begets members into the divine family (1:13) as he awards life to the disciples of Jesus (5:21). The Son's life is dependent on the Father (6:57) but is also said to be rooted in himself (1:4; 5:26, 40; 6:33, 57, 63; 14:19) as he grants life to whomever he will (5:21; 17:2) in joint cooperation with the Spirit (6:63). The words/commands of Jesus are the means through which life is bestowed to the disciples (5:39–40; 6:63b, 68; 12:50). The Spirit participates in the conferral of life upon the believers by impressing the words of Jesus upon his followers (3:5–8; 16:13–15). Jesus' association with his Father provides him with the ability to contain life in himself (5:26; 6:57) and to grant this life to those who believe in him (1:4; 3:15–16; 5:21, 40; 6:27, 33, 40, 54, 68; 10:10, 28; 11:25; 14:6; 17:2, 3; 20:31). The Son confers life upon his followers in the present time (3:16; 5:40; 6:47, 53, 54) and in the eschatological future (6:50–51, 58), culminating in the resurrection (5:29; 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:25–26). Life results in abundant living (10:10) that is secured by Jesus (10:28–30) and is dependent on Jesus (6:57; 14:19). Life is found in close association with the light (1:4; 8:12), water (4:10–14), bread (6:35, 48, 58), words of Jesus (6:63, 68; 12:48), word/commandment of God (5:37–40; 12:48–50), judgment (3:16, 36; 5:21–29; 12:48), and the Holy Spirit (4:14; 6:63; 7:38). John extends the above benefits, which are derived from eternal life as part of participation within the divine family, to the committed disciple (6:60–71; 8:31).

⁴⁹³ Beck rejects Peter as a model disciple because Peter never witnesses to others about Jesus and because his only testimony is his denial of knowing Jesus (18:15–27). However, the thematic alignment of Peter's affirmation in 6:68–69 with the purpose of GJohn (20:30–31), Peter's commitment to follow Jesus (13:8–9, 37; 21:19–22), and Jesus' restoration and entrusting of the sheep to Peter (10:15–16; 21:15–18) suggests that John presents Peter as a paradigmatic disciple. Instead of rejecting Peter because of his flaws, we can interpret his character as a model of continuous discipleship that may be marred with flaws yet nevertheless persevering. Beck, *Discipleship*, 123–27, 141–42.

2.2.3 The Intimacy of the Relationships in the Divine Family

We have observed the benefits of the disciple being born of God (§2.2.1), having an intimate knowledge of the Father (§2.2.2a), and having life extended to the disciple by Jesus (§2.2.2b). Here I discuss the intimacy that characterizes the relationships in the divine family, namely, the Father-Son relationship and the Father-Son-disciples relationship, with the former being the paradigm for the latter (17:11, 21–23). Since John links the promise of unity/intimacy with familial terminology (e.g., 17:21–26), I discuss this theme as a corollary benefit of membership in the divine family.

The intimacy between Jesus and God is foregrounded at the start of the Gospel through the dual use of the pronoun *πρός* that conveys active communion (1:1, 2).⁴⁹⁴ At the close of the prologue, John introduces the intimacy of the Father-Son relationship in three ways—by designating the Son as *μονογενής* (1:14, 18; 3:16, 18), by denoting the exclusive ability of the Son to see the Father (1:18; 5:37; 6:46; 14:7–11), and by depicting the Son “in the bosom of the Father.” In 1:18, John emphatically states that no one has ever seen the Father except the only begotten God,⁴⁹⁵ and this assertion along with the above statements of intimacy qualifies Jesus to be the only revealer of the Father (note the emphatic *οὐδεὶς* and *ἐκεῖνος* in v. 18).⁴⁹⁶ Peppard observes the “uniqueness”⁴⁹⁷ of Jesus in his function as “the word/light, which is unique in its glory, its closeness to the Father, and its power to reveal.”⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁴ Harris, *John*, 18.

⁴⁹⁵ There is a textual variant in 1:18 with two dominant readings—*μονογενὴς θεός* is better attested in the mss (e.g., $\mathfrak{P}^{75} \mathfrak{P}^{66} \mathfrak{N}^* \text{B C}^* \text{L pc syr}^p$) than *μονογενὴς υἱός* (e.g., A C³ W^{supp} Θ Ψ). See Metzger, *Commentary*, 169–70.

⁴⁹⁶ Harris, *John*, 39. Harris also notes that the emphatic pronoun *ἐκεῖνος* covers all three descriptions of the Logos, *μονογενής*, *θεός*, and *ὁ ὦν*. Bultmann famously said that Jesus came to reveal that he is the revealer. However, John denotes that Jesus also came to reveal his own identity (4:25–26; 5:22; 8:9:35–38; 10:24–25, 36; note *ἐγὼ εἰμὶ* statements throughout GJohn), to make God known (1:18; 5:43; 17:6), to reveal his oneness with the Father (8:29; 10:30, 38; 14:10–11, 20; 16:32; 17:11, 21–23), for judgment (9:39), to save the world (12:47), to expose sin (15:22), to offer eternal life (10:10; 12:50), to testify to the truth (18:37), to be glorified through the cross (12:27–28), and to free people from darkness (12:46). Pace, Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:66.

⁴⁹⁷ Peppard, *Son of God*, 140–5.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 143. He continues, “this verse is also not about sonship or begetting, neither of which is present in the text...It is primarily about the combined transcendence and immanence of God in the Incarnate Word/light. The Word is the only God and is thus one with God, as in 1:1, but it also reveals

The Son's revelation of the Father gave access (14:6)⁴⁹⁹ to those who believe to see the Father also (12:45; 14:9–11).

John also deploys the expression Son (of God) to portray Jesus in a unique and intimate filial relationship with the Father.⁵⁰⁰ Lincoln observes that Son of God is “a key christological title in this Gospel, standing for everything unique in Jesus’ relationship to God and for the oneness between the Father and the Son.”⁵⁰¹ In GJohn, this title spans the entire narrative of the Gospel, from Jesus’ initial introduction as the Son of God (1:34)⁵⁰² to the same appellation being the cause for his demise (19:7). There are 19 references in seven distinct passages to Jesus as the Son of the Father.⁵⁰³ Additionally, there are nine references to Jesus as the Son of God.⁵⁰⁴ Hurtado observes that in GJohn the expression Son of (God) connotes “the belief that Jesus is in some intrinsic way also divine and of heavenly origin.”⁵⁰⁵ The title Son of God takes the reader back to the prologue where the Logos/Jesus was

the previously unseen God, as light that shines in darkness (1:5) and Word that becomes flesh (1:14).” Ibid., 144. I disagree with Peppard’s conclusion because there is fatherhood and sonship language with every Johannine use of *μονογενής* in reference to Jesus (e.g., 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18). Moreover, the mention of the Father in 1:18 must imply a son. Additionally, the textual variant noted in footnote 495 “only son” (instead of “only god”) suggests at least some of the ancient readers agreed in seeing sonship in the verse.

⁴⁹⁹ I concur with Brown and Segovia’s explanation of the predicate statement, *Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωή*, who view “the way” as the primary predicate and “the truth and “the life” explain “the way.” Segovia writes, “The self-identification of 14:6b₂₋₃ explain, by means of central metaphors from the Gospel, how it is that Jesus is the ‘way’ to the Father, namely, insofar as he is ‘truth’...and ‘life.’ There is no other “way” to the Father except through Jesus, who is both “truth” and “life.” Brown, *John*, 620–21; Segovia, *Farewell*, 86 fn. 51.

⁵⁰⁰ Only Jesus is called the Son of God in GJohn.

⁵⁰¹ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: the Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 63.

⁵⁰² While some mss read *ὁ ἐκλεκτὸς τοῦ θεοῦ* (e.g., $\mathfrak{P}^{5vid} \text{ it}^{b, e, ff2*} \text{ syr}^{c, s}$), or *ὁ ἐκλεκτὸς υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ* (e.g., *it*^a *it*^{ff2c} *vg*^{mss} *syr*^{pal(mss)}), or *electus filius* ((a) *ff2c* sa), Metzger prefers *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ* on account of age and diversity of mss (e.g., $\mathfrak{P}^{66} \mathfrak{P}^{75(c)} \text{ it}^2 \text{ A B C W}^{supp} \Theta \Pi \Psi$). For evidence, see NA27 apparatus, UBS4 apparatus, and Metzger, *Commentary*, 172.

⁵⁰³ John 3:16–18, 34–36; 5:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27; 6:40; 8:35–36; 14:13; 17:1.

⁵⁰⁴ John 1:34, 49; 3:18; 5:25; 10:36; 11:4, 27; 19:7; 20:31. Although some manuscripts have *θεοῦ* in 9:35 (see NA27, UBS4 for the list of manuscripts), Metzger notes that “the improbability of *θεοῦ* being altered to *ἀνθρώπου* is so great, that the Committee regarded the reading adopted for the text as virtually certain.” Metzger, *Commentary*, 169–70, 194.

⁵⁰⁵ Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 362. Contra von Martitz who understands the “sending” of Jesus as being parallel to OT prophets sent by God or philosophical preachers sent by Zeus. P. W. von Martitz et al., “*υἱός, υἱοθεσία*,” 8:375.

portrayed as “the begotten God” in an intimate relationship with the Father (1:1, 14, 18).

John also uses the oneness/unity motif⁵⁰⁶ to portray the intimacy of the Father and the Son. John demonstrates the oneness/unity of the Father and the Son in the following statements: to know Jesus is to know the Father (8:19; 14:7; 16:3); to believe in Jesus is to believe in the Father (12:44); to receive Jesus is to receive the Father (13:20); to see Jesus is to see the Father (12:45; 14:9); to hate Jesus is to hate the Father (15:23, 24); to be with Jesus is to be with the Father (14:2–3); to be loved by Jesus is to be loved by the Father (14:23; 15:9; 16:27; 17:23); and Jesus and the Father share everything (3:35; 17:7, 10–11). For example, in 17:1–6 we read the Father and the Son share glory, mission, knowledge, prior co-existence in glory, and they are co-owners of all flesh (=disciples). The oneness of the Father and the Son is also expressed in the Son deriving his life from the Father (5:26; 6:57), and Jesus acknowledging that his ability to extend life to others is a function of the Father giving Jesus the right to do so (3:35–36; 5:21; 17:2, 7). While the Father and the Son’s conferral of life on others is an act of co-operation, the Father “remains the primary source of life,”⁵⁰⁷ so Van der Watt rightly concludes: “life is therefore a gift of the Father through Jesus to those who believe and belong to the Father.”⁵⁰⁸

The evidence Jesus uses to defend his claim of oneness with the Father is his teaching and his works, both of which Jesus claims are derived from the Father (14:10–11). Jesus promises to integrate the disciples into union with the Father and himself, and the proof of this union would be the works of the disciples (14:12).⁵⁰⁹ That is, just as Jesus’ works were accomplished by the Father because Jesus is in the Father,⁵¹⁰ so the disciples’ greater works⁵¹¹ would confirm that they too are in union

⁵⁰⁶ Oneness and unity are used interchangeably. Closely related to the intimacy/unity/oneness motif is the theme of abiding which is discussed in chapter 3. Bennema similarly affirms the closeness of the themes of abiding and intimacy. Bennema, *Power*, 140.

⁵⁰⁷ Van der Watt, *Family*, 206.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 208.

⁵⁰⁹ Tolmie observes that the promise of performing greater works is meant to motivate the implied readers that they need not act like the disciples in John 13–14, but that true discipleship is within their reach if they continue to believe. Tolmie, *Farewell*, 205–6.

⁵¹⁰ For example, the Father’s sharing of life with the Son demonstrates continuity between the work of the Father and the Son. Barrett, *John*, 260.

with the Father. Jesus assures the performance of these works because he promises to mediate the disciples' requests to the Father so that the Father is glorified through the Son as he answers the disciples' petitions (14:13–14). Thus, in 14:1, Jesus challenges his disciples to believe in God and in him, and in 14:10–11 he exhorts the disciples to believe that he is in the Father and the Father is in him. In sum, Jesus claims oneness with the Father when he expresses, "I and the Father are one" (10:30).

The Spirit's role in the oneness motif is to dwell with the believer as the Spirit of truth and to reveal the truth to the believer (14:16–17).⁵¹² John explains the Spirit's involvement in mediating knowledge to the disciple as evident in the genitive τῆς ἀληθείας (15:26; 16:13), which describes the cognitive function of the Spirit in communicating truth.⁵¹³ After Jesus' departure, the Spirit is said to communicate the truth to the believers, leading them into deeper understanding of the truth previously revealed through Jesus (14:26; 16:13),⁵¹⁴ truth that encapsulates the disciples' understanding of their oneness with Jesus and the Father (14:20). The oneness motif will be explained more fully to the disciples in "that day," which is the day of the Spirit's arrival (14:20; 16:23, 26; see §3.3.2.2).

The Father-Son relational oneness/unity is the paradigm for the unity among the disciples (17:11, 21–23). In this passage, the perfect unity among the disciples is the means by which the world will know that Jesus is God's emissary.⁵¹⁵ The basis

⁵¹¹ Köstenberger explains that "greater" does not refer to numerical success or apostolic miraculous acts, but rather works performed by the exalted Jesus through his disciples as they continue his mission. Köstenberger, *Missions*, 171–75.

⁵¹² Bauckham observes that the oneness language is binitarian not trinitarian, that is, it includes only the Father and the Son, not the Spirit (10:30; 17:11, 21–23). Yet I observe that the Spirit is the bond that communicates the relational intimacy between the Father, the Son, and believers (e.g., 14:15–20). Bauckham, *Glory*, 36.

⁵¹³ Barrett, *John*, 463.

⁵¹⁴ Bennema synthesizes the teaching function of the Spirit as follows: "The Paraclete will lead the disciples into a more perfect knowledge of Jesus' teaching. The Paraclete does not bring independent revelation but interprets Jesus' revelation; he draws out the significance of the historical revelation in Christ." Bennema, *Power*, 228–34, citing 231. Similarly, Barrett, *John*, 467; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 261, 283; Bultmann, *John*, 574–76; de la Potterie, "Truth," 77; Harris, *John*, 278; Lincoln, *John*, 397; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:83; Thompson, *John*, 316; Tolmie, *Farewell*, 86 fn. 45. Cf. Painter who argues for new information revealed by the Spirit. John Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993), 431–32.

⁵¹⁵ Note the perfect periphrastic ὧσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἓν which stresses the goal and result of perfect union. The dual reference to ἀπέστειλας (17:21, 23) links the disciples' unity to mission. Harris, *John*, 293. A thorough treatment of the mission/agency motif is beyond the scope of this thesis, thus my

for the disciples' unity is the unity between the Father and the Son (note the repeated use of *καθώς* vv. 21, 22).⁵¹⁶ The paradigmatic function of the oneness of the Father-Son to the oneness of the disciples is further evident through John's application of the same vocabulary to describe the oneness/unity in both relationships (i.e., the cardinal *ἐν*).⁵¹⁷ John also presents the unity of the disciples through the symbol of a sheepfold (10:16) and the vine (15:1–11) and links it to Jesus as the one who is the basis of that unity.⁵¹⁸ Thus, John portrays Jesus as promising to integrate the disciples into a relationship with the Father, Son, and Spirit and to create unity between the disciples that resembles the unity of the Father-Son relationship. The unity of the disciples will be the means of continuing the mission of Jesus and expanding his sheepfold (17:20–23).

2.2.4 Honor and Glory in the Divine Family

We have observed that the disciple is brought into the divine family by God's initiative, that the disciple is granted eternal life that enables him to relate within the divine family, and that the disciple is unified with the Father, the Son, the Spirit, and with other believers. Below, I discuss the future honor promised to the individual who continuously follows Jesus. In 12:25–26, John portrays Jesus as promising honor to the disciple who serves and follows him. Since John links the promise of honor to eternal life (v. 25) and to the Father as the one who confers this honor (v.

comments will be brief. Participation in the mission of Jesus is expected of Jesus' followers. John positions the theme of mission with familial terminology (e.g., 4:34–38; 14:12; 15:8, 16, 27; 17:18; 20:21). Part of the mission is to forgive the sins of others which is a privilege the disciples have to fulfill (20:23). Along with being sent into the world comes protection from the evil one who is the ruler of the world (12:31; 14:30; 16:33). Jesus prays for protection thus we can view it as a benefit joined to engagement in the mission (17:9–19). Because Jesus came to make the Father and his love known (e.g., 17:4–6, 23, 26), Chennattu rightly points out that “the ultimate objective of discipleship is to make God's love known.” Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 136. See appendix F for additional discussion of the mission/agency motif in GJohn and refer to Köstenberger, *Missions*.

⁵¹⁶ Brown notes that the *καθώς* is both comparative and causative. He writes, “heavenly unity is both the model and source of the unity of the believers.” Brown, *John*, 769.

⁵¹⁷ Bauckham traces the Johannine references to the cardinal *ἐν* to the Jewish Shema, suggesting that John is pointing to “relational intimacy of Jesus and the Father within the identity of the one God” and uses this as the basis for the developing unity of the disciples into one. Bauckham, *Glory*, 21–41, citing 34.

⁵¹⁸ See Bennema, *Power*, 136.

26), it is appropriate to examine honor as a corollary benefit of membership in the divine family.

Jesus promises honor to the faithful disciple in the context of his own death (12:23–24 and 27–34). Jesus responds to the desire of the Greeks to see him by connecting his death to glorification. Jesus is then presented as inviting his audience to be willing to die for him in order to gain eternal life. The condition for the reward of eternal life is to hate one's life to the point of death.⁵¹⁹ Jesus then lays out the expectations one must fulfill to receive honor from the Father that will be granted in the abode where Jesus will be in the future. Honor is extended to the disciple who is characterized by serving (note the repeated conditional clause *ἐάν τις ἐμοὶ διακονῇ* with the present tense *διακονῇ*, v. 26) and following Jesus (note the present tense *ἀκολουθεῖτω*, v. 26). Thus, I suggest that John depicts Jesus as encouraging his listeners, and by extension John's readers, toward faithful service and toward following Jesus by means of the promises of eternal life, residing with Jesus, and honor from the Father; and these promises are presented in light of the threat of death, of which Jesus is an example in the immediate context.

The honor that the Father confers on a faithful disciple can be understood in light of the ancient "honor and shame" culture.⁵²⁰ Regarding the implications of the honor associated with membership in the right family, Peppard writes, "A son could be raised up from the bottom of society and installed among the nobility."⁵²¹ Kunst further explains that "the adoptive son really was to become the son and agent of the adoptive father; he was not a substitute son, nor a second-class son. The adopted son, moreover, assumed the status of the adoptive father and exchanged his own [status]."⁵²² As discussed above, the privileged status is attributed to the disciples at

⁵¹⁹ The substantival present participle *ὁ μισῶν* is probably gnomic. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 615–16.

⁵²⁰ In reference to family, Hanson observes, "the fundamental and overarching social value has been honor." K. C. Hanson, "All in the Family: Kinship in Agrarian Roman Palestine," in *The Social World of the New Testament: Insights and Models*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey, Stewart, Eric Clark (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 39.

⁵²¹ Peppard, *Son of God*, 57. Similary Van der Watt notes that birth into a royal family implied a superior status since through birth one could participate in the privilege and honor of that family. Van der Watt, *Family*, 175.

⁵²² Christiane Kunst, "Römische Adoption: zur Strategie einer Familienorganisation" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Universität Potsdam, 2005), 294. "Der Adoptierte wurde tatsächlich zum Sohn und zum

the outset of GJohn through filial terminology of “children” (1:12–13) and is carried through until the conclusion of the Gospel in 20:17 where the disciples are called “brothers.” Jesus’ statement in 20:17, “I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God,” integrates the disciples into a relationship with God the Father that resembles the Father’s relationship with Jesus. Chennattu observes in this verse an allusion to the OT covenantal formula, “I will be your/their God.”⁵²³ I suggest this to be a ratification of the disciples’ membership in the divine family, as this is the first occurrence in GJohn when Jesus is depicted as calling his followers “brothers.” As de Jonge comments, “Thanks to the Son the children belong to the great family of God.”⁵²⁴ This is the message that Mary Magdalene was mandated by Jesus to communicate to the disciples—that the disciples have been integrated into the divine family (20:17).⁵²⁵ Whereas previously the disciples’ relationship was primarily with Jesus, by calling the disciples “brothers,” John depicts Jesus as placing his disciples into a new and special relationship with his Father (see also 14:6).⁵²⁶ The statement in 20:17 is the result of having a relationship with Jesus and the fulfillment of the promise made in 1:12–13, “He gave them the right to become children of God,” which implies that as Stibbe writes, “From now on everyone who believes in Jesus can call God, ‘My Father.’”⁵²⁷ I conclude that we can read John’s emphasis on the family motif from the commencement to the conclusion of his Gospel as a way in which John motivates his readers to embrace Jesus’ call to continuous discipleship because it results in honor and glory that was previously reserved for the Father and the Son (5:23; 17:1, 4–5), but is now promised to the believer in Jesus (12:26; 17:22, 24).

Sachwalter des Adoptierenden, er war kein Ersatzsohn oder gar ein Sohn zweiter Klasse. Der Adoptierte übernahm auch den Status des Adoptierenden und veränderte seinen eigenen.”

⁵²³ Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 154.

⁵²⁴ de Jonge, *Stranger*, 152.

⁵²⁵ Chennattu proposes that Mary Magdalene’s post-resurrection interaction with Jesus that is characterized by joy and yearning qualifies her to be the representative figure of the new covenant community that is likened to Israel’s longing for Yahweh. However, there is nothing in 20:11–18 that presents Mary as more than a messenger of Jesus’ resurrection. In fact, the disciples are also joyful when they see Jesus (20:20). See footnote 560 for discussion of Mary the mother of Jesus functioning as the representative of the Johannine community. Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 148.

⁵²⁶ Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:320.

2.3 Summary

In this chapter, I argued that John's first prominent benefit for continuous discipleship is membership in the divine family.⁵²⁸ Such membership is privileged because it is obtained through divine initiative. This membership is experienced through the present possession of eternal life, which can be defined as the ability and quality of relating within the divine family. This life is eternal in that it culminates in a future resurrection and permanent presence with God. I argued that John's use of verbal tenses and his placement of certain benefits in the context of opposition to belief in Jesus suggest that the image of the divine family (and various corollary benefits) is deployed by John to persuade his readers to continuous discipleship.

⁵²⁷ Mark Stibbe, "Telling the Father's Story," in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, ed. John Lierman (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 183.

⁵²⁸ Bauckham cautions that while John features the corporate benefits of following Jesus (e.g., one flock, vine metaphor, unity with other disciples), John also values personal intimacy between Jesus and the individual disciple. This is evident in the example of the individual disciples following Jesus (e.g., Nathaniel, Nicodemus, Peter) and in the sayings that feature the individual responding to Jesus (e.g., *πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων, ἐάν τις, ὃς δ' αὖν, οὐδεὶς*). Bauckham, *Glory*, 1–19.

CHAPTER 3: BENEFIT 2—ABIDING

ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς μου μοναὶ πολλαὶ εἰσιν.

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined membership in the divine family as the first of three primary compensatory benefits that John deploys to persuade his readers to discipleship. In this chapter, I introduce abiding with the Father and the Son through the Spirit as the second of the three primary benefits conferred on a believer in Jesus. I argue that the abiding of the Father and the Son through the Spirit is a benefit that is experienced by the believer both in the present time and in the eschatological future (14:2–3, 15–24). In addition, John presents abiding as a condition—that is, if the disciple abides in Jesus, the disciple will also enjoy corollary benefits (15:1–11).

In §3.2, I examine the imagery of God dwelling with people through the Logos dwelling (σκηνόω) with people which evokes the OT imagery of God’s presence in the tabernacle.

In §3.3, I focus on the concept of abiding expressed in the frequent terminology of μένω/μονή in GJohn (μένω 40 times; μονή 2 times), with special attention to the FD, as that is where this meaning of abiding is fully developed. The motif of abiding is peculiar to GJohn in that it refers to the mutual abiding between the Father and the believer, the Son/Jesus and the believer, and the Spirit and the believer.⁵²⁹ There are three aspects to abiding in GJohn. First, from 14:2–3 I argue that permanent abiding can be understood as a promise that is experienced by the believer in Jesus in the eschatological future. Second, I propose that in 14:15–24 John promises that the Father and the Son will abide in the believer through the Spirit in the present time. Third, from 15:1–11 I contend that abiding is portrayed as a condition that the believer in Jesus must fulfill if she is to experience corollary benefits. The believer who abides in Jesus—by loving Jesus, which is expressed in obedience to his commands—is promised the following corollary benefits: the

⁵²⁹ See appendix E for the listing of every use of μένω in GJohn.

presence of the Paraclete, love, peace, joy, avoidance of judgment, answered requests, the ability to perform great works, fruit, and affirmation of being a genuine disciple of Jesus (§3.3.3). Thus in this chapter I aim to show that the Johannine theme of abiding is a present and a future compensatory benefit that is a reward for continuous discipleship, and, at the same time, that it is also a condition for the disciple of Jesus, which, if fulfilled, yields additional benefits.

3.2 God Dwelling with His People

In this section I show that John's theme of abiding evokes OT imagery of God dwelling with his people. In the OT, God's presence with Israel was temporary whereas in GJohn, the disciples of Jesus are promised to dwell permanently with God through their relationship with the Son and the Spirit.

3.2.1 God's Presence and the Tabernacle

The Johannine allusions to Moses and to the Pentateuch have been observed by many commentators who have demonstrated that it is instructive to read GJohn in light of the OT.⁵³⁰ In the Exodus narrative, Moses mediated God's presence (Exod 13:19–22; 33:7–11; 34:30–35; Num 14:14; Deut 1:30–33); in GJohn, Jesus came as the one who reveals God and provides access to God (John 1:18; 14:6–10).⁵³¹ John first establishes the relationship between *θεός* and the Logos in 1:1 by noting that the Logos was with God. John then exclaims in 1:14 that the Logos became flesh and dwelt with people (*ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν*). John employs *σκηνώ*⁵³² to describe the

⁵³⁰ Johannine references to Moses are in 1:14–18, 45; 3:14; 5:45–46; 6:32; 7:19, 22, 23; 8:5; 9:28–29. See Mary L. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 123–4; T. F. Glasson, *Moses in the Fourth Gospel*, SBT 40 (Naperville, IL: A.R. Allenson, 1963); Stan Harstine, *Moses as a Character in the Fourth Gospel: A Study of Ancient Reading Techniques*, JSNTSup 229 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); McGrath, *Apologetic Christology*, 149–95; Meeks, *Prophet-King*, NovTSup; Claus Westermann, *The Gospel of John in the Light of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 76–77.

⁵³¹ Marshall contends that Jesus is to be understood primarily not as a revealer or mythological divine figure but as a “counterpart to Moses (Jn 1:17) who establishes the new community.” Boismard calls Jesus the “new Moses” due to the parallelism of fear and preparation of a place between Deut 1:29–33 and John 14:1–3. Ashton argues that Jesus replaces Moses. See §5.2.3 for further treatment of Ashton's view. Ashton, *Origins*; Boismard, “L'évolution,” 520–21; Marshall, *Theology*, 512–3.

⁵³² The Hebrew noun *שֶׁכֶּנֶת*, which appears 139 times in the MT and in 136 occurrences (exceptions are Num 16:24, 27; Isa 22:16) refers to the abode of YHWH, is rendered in the LXX by *σκηνή*.

dwelling of the incarnate Logos with humanity. John links the Gospel to the wilderness narrative through the verb *σκηνώ* in 1:14 that is cognate with the noun *σκηνή* that describes God's presence with his people in the tabernacle (e.g., Exod 25:9; 29:42–46; 40:29–38). Thus, similar to the OT wilderness narrative that identifies the tabernacle as the dwelling place of God amidst his people, John depicts the incarnation of the Logos as God “tabernacling”⁵³³ with people in the person of Jesus.⁵³⁴

3.2.2 Jesus is the Mediator of the Glory of God

In addition to John's allusion to the presence of God in the Exodus narrative through the imagery of the tabernacle, the mention of glory in John 1:14 further substantiates the proposal that Jesus mediates the presence of God in GJohn.⁵³⁵ God's presence with Israel was not merely symbolized in the pillar of cloud⁵³⁶ and a pillar of fire (Exod 13:21–22), the ark (Exod 25:22), the tent of meeting and the tabernacle (Exod 33:8–11; 40:34–38), and the temple (2 Chron 7:1–3), but God's presence with Israel is also designated as glory (see Exod 29:43–46). In the narrative concerning the inauguration of the Solomonic temple, the Chronicler describes the filling of the temple with God's presence when he writes:

Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house. The priests could not enter into the

McHugh explains that John is intentional in employing the cognate *ἐσκήνωσεν* in 1:14 because it alludes back to Exod 25:9 where *σκηνή* is used for the first time to refer to God's place of abode with his people. McHugh, *John 1–4*, 55–6.

⁵³³ Coloe uses the same term to describe the “tabernacling presence of God's glory.” Coloe, *God Dwells*, 11.

⁵³⁴ For a comparison of John 1:14–18 and Exod 33–34, see Craig S. Keener, ““We Beheld His Glory!” (John 1:14),” in *John, Jesus, and History, Volume 2: Aspects of Historicity in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2009), 24.

⁵³⁵ References to “glory” are found in John 1:14; 2:11; 5:41, 44; 7:18; 8:50, 54; 9:24; 11:4, 40; 12:41, 43; 17:5, 22, and 24 but only in 1:14 does John suggest that Jesus manifests the glory of God.

Although 14:6–10 does not contain the term *δόξα*, John depicts Jesus as claiming to be the visual representative of God because the Father abides (*μένων*) in him.

⁵³⁶ The tannaitic (70–250 CE) and amoraic (250–550 CE) midrashim develop the concept of the cloud representing divine protection and intimacy. Rubenstein, *Sukkot*, 301; Burton A. Visotzsky, “Midrash,” *NIDB*.

house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house (2 Chron 7:1–2; see also 1 Kgs 8:10–11).⁵³⁷

Spaulding links glory with the tabernacle and with the temple when she says: “The appearance of God's glory through his pillar and through fire marks these locations as the chosen dwelling places for God.”⁵³⁸

The relationship between God's presence, glory, and the temple is also affirmed negatively in Ezek 10:18–19 where the prophet describes the departure of the glory of God as being symbolic of the withdrawal of his presence from the temple and subsequently from Jerusalem, signifying the removal of God's presence from Israel (Ezek 11:23). The prophet reintroduces the discussion concerning the presence of God with a prediction about the return of God's glory (Ezek 43:4–7). This prediction is embedded into Ezekiel's eschatological narrative⁵³⁹ in which he describes the rebuilding of the temple (Ezek 40–48). In Ezek 36:26–28, the prophet predicts the dwelling of God with his people:

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances...and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Ezekiel's depiction is consistent with John's portrayal of the coming of the Spirit: “He abides with you and will be in you” (John 14:17). In the OT, the temple functioned as the locus of God's presence and glory and was the venue for the worship of God; and analogous to this, in GJohn Jesus is depicted as sharing and expressing the glory of God (1:14) and the presence of God (14:6–10).⁵⁴⁰ Upon

⁵³⁷ In *Ant.* 8.102, Josephus notes that when the temple was dedicated, the aroma of the sacrifices was carried away into the distance and this was perceived as God's presence and dwelling with his people.

⁵³⁸ See also Exod 24:16–17; 40:34–35; Lev 9:23–24; 1 Chr 21:26; 1 Kgs 8:10–11; 2 Chr 7:1–2. Mary B. Spaulding, *Commemorative Identities: Jewish Social Memory and the Johannine Feast of Booths*, LNTS (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 139.

⁵³⁹ Coloe, *God Dwells*, 47.

⁵⁴⁰ Scholars have examined the OT imagery of God's presence with his people in the temple and have argued for the Johannine portrayal of Jesus being the replacement of the temple as he mediates the presence of God. For treatments of Jesus as the new temple in GJohn, see *ibid.*; Sigurd Grindheim, *God's Equal: What Can We Know About Jesus' Self-understanding?*, LNTS 446 (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 205–18; Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John*, PBTM (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011); Alan R. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John*, JSNTSupp 220 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Andreas J. Köstenberger, “The Destruction of the Second Temple and the Composition of the Fourth

Jesus' departure, his presence is continued through the Spirit (14:18–23; see §3.3.2.2).

In sum, John's reference to God "tabernacling with humans" (1:14) calls to mind the OT passages describing God's presence with his people. Whereas in the Torah and the prophetic literature God's symbolic presence was temporarily expressed through the pillars of cloud and fire, the ark of the covenant, the tent of meeting, the tabernacle, the temple, and the glory motif, in GJohn Jesus personifies God's presence (1:14; 14:6–10).

3.3 Abiding in GJohn

3.3.1 Introduction

John develops the OT theme of God abiding with humans and mankind abiding with God through the verb μένω (40 times) and through the noun μονή twice (14:2, 23). In addition to the literal meaning of μένω in reference to remaining in a location (1:38, 39; 2:12; 4:40; 7:9; 8:35; 10:40; 11:6, 54; 14:25; 19:31) and to being alive (12:24, 34; 21:22, 23),⁵⁴¹ John also uses μένω symbolically. Μένω refers to the Spirit abiding on Jesus (1:32–33) and with(in) the disciples (14:17), the presence of God's wrath (3:36), the word of God/Jesus inhabiting an individual (5:38; 8:31), the spiritual food that results in eternal life (6:27), sin that remains (9:41), abiding in darkness (12:46), the abiding of the Father with the Son (14:10), the abiding of Jesus in the Father's love (15:10), the obligation of believers to abide with(in) Jesus/Jesus' love (6:56; 15:4–10), the permanency of the disciples' fruit (15:16), and dwelling with God

Gospel," in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, ed. John Lierman, WUNT 2.219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 69–108; James McCaffrey, *The House with Many Rooms: The Temple Theme of Jn. 14, 2–3*, AnBib 114 (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1988); Gunnar H. Østenstad, *Patterns of Redemption in the Fourth Gospel: An Experiment in Structural Analysis*, SBEC 38 (Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press, 1998); Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010), 50–55; Stephen T. Um, *The Theme of Temple Christology in John's Gospel*, LNTS 312 (London: T & T Clark, 2006). In his recent work, Kubiś shows "the relevance of Zechariah for the Johannine Christology and pneumatology, both [of which] centered around the idea of the temple." Adam Kubiś, *The Book of Zechariah in the Gospel of John*, EBib 64 (Pendé, France: J. Gabalda et C^{ie}, 2012), 490.

⁵⁴¹ All 12 uses of μένω in SG have a literal meaning: Matt 10:11=Mark 6:10=Luke 9:4; Matt 11:23; 26:38=Mark 14:34; Luke 1:56; 8:27; 10:7; 19:5; 24:29. There are no instances of the noun μονή in SG.

(14:2, 23).⁵⁴² As the focus of my thesis is the benefits of discipleship, I limit my study of μένω/μονή to 14:2–3, 15–24, and 15:1–11 because that is where John uses these terms to describe the benefit of abiding and the obligation to abide in Jesus to receive corollary benefits from fulfilling this command.⁵⁴³

I propose that we can understand the Johannine theme of abiding as a compensatory benefit that is extended to the committed disciple in light of hostility that he may suffer for his allegiance to Jesus (e.g., 15:18–27; 16:1–2). This benefit is experienced by the believer both in the present time (14:15–24) and in the eschatological future (14:2–3).⁵⁴⁴ John also presents the theme of abiding as a condition for the disciple to abide in Jesus, fulfillment of which yields additional corollary benefits (15:1–11; see §3.3.3.2).

3.3.2 Abiding as a Present and a Future Benefit

The FD⁵⁴⁵ has been interpreted as Jesus’ final speech, comparable to the typical Greek or Roman last will and testament.⁵⁴⁶ The overall tone of this speech is one of comfort, preparing the disciples for Jesus’ departure,⁵⁴⁷ especially through the prediction of the coming of the Paraclete who will permanently reside with the

⁵⁴² Jerumanis classifies the Johannine references to abiding into (1) non-theological meaning, (2) meaning with theological significance, and (3) with a theological meaning. Pascal-Marie Jerumanis, *Réaliser la communion avec Dieu: croire, vivre et demeurer dans l’évangile selon S. Jean*, EBib 32 (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1996), 412–17. Scholtissek on the other hand divides the meaning of μένω into two categories—local (2:12; 4:40; 7:9; 10:40; 11:6; 19:31) and theological (the remaining uses of μένω). Klaus Scholtissek, *In ihm sein und bleiben: die Sprache der Immanenz in den Johanneischen Schriften*, HBS 21 (Freiburg; New York: Herder, 2000), 155–56.

⁵⁴³ I discuss the use of μένω in 6:56 in reference to abiding in Jesus in §2.2.2.3c.

⁵⁴⁴ Ford omits the eschatological element in Johannine abiding and understands it in the context of the immanence of the relationship between the Father, Son, Spirit, and the believers, which Ford designates as “mutual love.” Ford, *Redeemer-Friend*, 150–59, citing 151.

⁵⁴⁵ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to address the rearrangement of the FD as proposed by Bultmann and others. I will approach the FD as a coherent unit, in line with Segovia’s assessment that “the present text of the farewell speech undoubtedly did represent to someone, somewhere, at some time, not only a unified and coherent literary whole but also a proper and meaningful form of communication with an audience—an artistic and strategic whole.” Segovia, *Farewell*, 48. For studies on the order of the FD, refer to Brown, *John*, 586–96; Bultmann, *John*, 457–631; Fernando F. Segovia, “John 15:18–16:4a: A First Addition to the Original Farewell Discourse?,” *CBQ* 45 (1983): 210–30; Segovia, *Farewell*, 20–58.

⁵⁴⁶ Lincoln, *John*, 384; Segovia, *Farewell*, 5. For a comparison of the FD with Socrates’ final speech in Plato’s *Phaedo*, see Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John*, RNBC (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 152–53.

⁵⁴⁷ Ben Witherington, *John’s Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 255.

followers of Jesus (14:16–17) and who will continue to teach them in Jesus’ absence (14:26; 16:13–15). The FD begins with a lesson on humility through a scene of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples (13:1–20), which is followed by discourses on Judas’ betrayal (13:21–30), love (13:31–35), and Peter’s denial (13:36–38). Then, the focus shifts from their feet to their hearts⁵⁴⁸ (14:1), and the motif of abiding assumes a more prominent place in the narrative. Jesus promises that he will abide with the disciples in the present (14:20, 23; 15:4–5),⁵⁴⁹ that the Paraclete will permanently abide with the disciples (14:16–17),⁵⁵⁰ and that the Father and the Son will abide with the disciples in the present (14:23) and in the future (14:2–3).⁵⁵¹

3.3.2.1 *John 14:2–3*

I argue that in 14:2 we can understand the noun *μοναί* as a reference to the eschatological fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to his disciples of a permanent dwelling place with God. John writes:

In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places (*μοναί* *πολλαί*). If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

There are four leading interpretations of *μοναί* in 14:2: (1) this noun refers to rooms in the Jerusalem temple.⁵⁵² However, if this is the case then Thomas’ question in

⁵⁴⁸ Stibbe, *John*, 151.

⁵⁴⁹ In addition to the verb *μένω*, John uses the prepositions *ἐν* and *μετά*, the verb *εἰμί*, and the cardinal *ἕν* to describe the union of the Son with the believer (14:20; 15:4–5), the union of the Spirit with the believer (14:16), and the intimate relationship of the Father and the Son that is the basis for the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son with the believer (8:29; 10:30, 38; 14:10–11; 16:32; 17:11, 21–23, 26). For my treatment of the unity/intimacy between the Father and the Son, and between the Father, Son, and the believer, see §2.2.3.

⁵⁵⁰ There is a textual variant in v. 16, with *μένη* rather than *ᾧ* appearing in \mathfrak{P}^{66} A D W Θ and other mss. The variant reading is *ἵνα μένη μεθ’ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*. Most commentaries ignore this variant (Beasley-Murray, *John*, 257; Keener, *John*, 972; Moloney, *John*, 402; Schnackenburg, *John*, 74–75) or see no significance in it (Bultmann, *John*, 615, fn. 1). However, if we follow the variant, then John’s use of *μένη* instead of *ᾧ* places the Spirit alongside the Father and the Son in regard to how each of them fulfills the function of abiding with(in) the disciples (consistent with 14:17). Brown is one of the few who comments on this variant, suggesting that there is “strong evidence for reading the verb ‘to remain’” in this way, but he does not expound on his comment. Brown, *John*, 639.

⁵⁵¹ Similarly Lee writes, “Abiding is about the realisation of discipleship as a present reality, yet also with a future dimension, articulated in the substantive *μονή* at 14:2.” Dorothy A. Lee, “Abiding in the Fourth Gospel: A Case-study in Feminist Biblical Theology,” *Pacifica* 10 (1997): 128.

⁵⁵² Keener, *John*, 936.

14:5 is irrelevant since he would have known the location of the Jerusalem temple. (2) Jesus makes an individual feel at home with the Father.⁵⁵³ Yet this view overlooks the fact that the promise of 14:2 is fulfilled after Jesus' departure not during the time of Jesus' presence with the disciples on earth (14:3–6, 28; 17:24). Additionally, this view discounts the meaning of *μοναί* in other Second Temple Jewish literature (see discussion below). (3) The noun *μοναί* refers to God dwelling relationally with his people in the Christian community (see discussion below).⁵⁵⁴ (4) This noun refers to an eschatological reunion between Jesus and his followers (see discussion below).⁵⁵⁵

Mary Coloe defends option three above arguing that *μοναί πολλαί* refers to God's relationship with his people in the new temple of the Christian community. She writes:

The phrase 'in my Father's house are many dwellings' is best understood, within the context of this Gospel, to mean a series of interpersonal relationships made possible because of the indwelling of the Father, Jesus and the Paraclete with the believer. The divine indwelling in the midst of a believing community makes it appropriate to speak of the community as a living Temple. The community is the House (household) of God.⁵⁵⁶

Coloe defends her view by examining the temple and household imagery in GJohn. First, she posits that John redefines the temple from being the physical structure in Jerusalem to being Jesus' body and then to being the Johannine community.⁵⁵⁷

Second, she examines the imagery of *οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς* (2:16) in contrast to *τῇ οἰκίᾳ*

⁵⁵³ Haenchen et al., *John*, 2:124–28.

⁵⁵⁴ Coloe, *God Dwells*, 157–78; Coloe, *Dwelling*, 145–66. Similarly Barrett, "John however is not thinking of compartments or dwelling-places, but of the action, or state, of *μένειν*. This means that to speak of 'heaven' may, if the term is not carefully understood, misinterpret the 'Father's house.' Communion with God is a permanent and universal possibility." Barrett, *John*, 457. For a similar view, see Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 103–4; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 395; C. F. D. Moule, "The Meaning of 'Life' in the Gospels and Epistles of St. John: A Study in the Story of Lazarus, John 11:1–44," *Theology* 78 (March 1975): 124; Van der Watt, *Family*, 344–50.

⁵⁵⁵ Moloney, *John*, 394; *BDAG*, "μονή." Simon views it through an eschatological but slightly Gnostic prism. He writes, "Whether the *monai pollai* are stations on the road to the highest realization of bliss—as many commentators, ancient and modern, assert—or whether such a semi-Gnostic notion is foreign to our Gospel must remain open and cannot be conclusively answered apart from the general context of the Gospel." Simon, "Eternal Life," 108.

⁵⁵⁶ Coloe, *God Dwells*, 163; Coloe, *Dwelling*, 110.

⁵⁵⁷ Coloe, *God Dwells*, 160–78; Coloe, *Dwelling*, 109–12.

τοῦ πατρὸς μου μοναὶ πολλαὶ εἰσιν (14:2) and argues that the former refers to a building, while the latter to a household which should be understood as a reference to relationships in a family.⁵⁵⁸ She writes, “The Father’s house will no longer be a construction of stones, but will be a *household* of many interpersonal relationships (*μοναὶ*) where the divine presence can dwell within believers” (italics original).⁵⁵⁹ She finds support for the establishment of the new temple/house in Jesus’ words to the Beloved Disciple (BD) and Mary from the cross: “Behold your mother... behold your son” (19:26). According to Coloe, this statement creates new relationships inasmuch as the BD represents all believers in Jesus who are now drawn into the relationship that Jesus had with Mary, that is, that of sonship. On account of this, Coloe contends that the believers are brought into Jesus’ sonship and that they become sons/daughters of the Father. In this way, she concludes, the new temple is formed at the foot of the cross.⁵⁶⁰ Third, Coloe observes:

The subject of the verb *dwell* throughout chapter 14 is not the believer, but God. The action, therefore, is not the *believers* coming to

⁵⁵⁸ Coloe, *God Dwells*, 160–62; Coloe, *Dwelling*, 108–109. Oliver and Van Aarde suggest that John is presenting God’s household (*μονή*) in the form of a kingdom (*ἡ βασιλεία*) that is mentioned in John 18:36. With this understanding they posit: “It appears that Jesus did not have a ‘far away place’ in mind, but rather a household *amongst* his followers, ‘on earth.’ Jesus would take them out of the realm of this world and designate a new realm for them, that of God...the household God wants to establish on earth for his followers is also his kingdom.” Although it seems like a novel interpretation to treat *μονή* in 14:2 and 23 in reference to *ἡ βασιλεία*, it does not appear to fit the context of John 14 since the conversation is not about kingship but abiding and filial unity. In fact, none of the 23 references to kingship in GJohn is juxtaposed with a reference to household or fatherly terminology. W. H. Oliver and A. G. van Aarde, “The Community of Faith as a Dwelling–Place of the Father: *βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ* As Household of God in the Johannine Farewell Discourse(s),” *Neot* 25 no. 2 (1991): 395.

⁵⁵⁹ Coloe, *God Dwells*, 167.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 186–88, 218–19. Farely similarly sees spiritual family imagery in this passage because of John’s use of symbolism in GJohn. Farely, views the BD as the successor to Jesus and Jesus’ mother as the representative of all faithful disciples who will now be taught by the BD as a witness to Jesus. And thus Farely argues the entire believing community is entrusted to the care of the BD. However, Bennema has rightly shown why Jesus’ saying to the BD and to Mary should not be understood symbolically (i.e., inauguration of the spiritual family) but in reference to the care that must characterize Christian relationships. First, if John intended to portray Jesus as inaugurating a spiritual family, then the terms of address would have to be brother and sister not mother and son. Second, Jesus’ disassociation from his mother by handing her over to the BD who took her into his home is gratuitous. Third, the action of taking her into his home rather than both of them becoming part of a new home under the oversight of Jesus is nonsensical since it is more in line with a literal interpretation than symbolic. Fourth, the earlier references to the inauguration of the divine family become tautological (see 8:31–47; 10:1–16). And I add that nowhere in GJohn does Jesus tell his disciples to follow the BD but rather to follow him (e.g., 21:19). Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 74–75; Farely, *Disciples*, 135–38.

dwell in God's heavenly abode, but the *Father*, the *Paraclete*, and *Jesus* coming to dwell with the believers. It is a 'descending' movement from the divine realm to the human, not an 'ascending' movement from the human to the divine (italics original).⁵⁶¹

Thus, Coloe proposes that these relationships make up the household of God (8:35) and that in 14:2, *μοναὶ πολλαί* do not designate heaven, but relationships within God's family.⁵⁶²

In contradistinction to the three interpretations presented above, I suggest that *μοναί* in 14:2 refers to the heavenly abode where believers will reside after the eschatological reunion with Jesus (view 4). With respect to this, I propose that John infuses two aspects into the noun *μονή*: in 14:23 the Father and the Son dwell with the believer in the *present*, whereas in 14:2 the believers dwell with Jesus and the Father in the *future* in a different locale, where the Father and Jesus are present.⁵⁶³ First, as noted above, Coloe rightly asserts that the subject of the verb *μένω* in John 14 is God/ Spirit/Jesus (vv. 10, 17, 25) and that God/Jesus are the subjects in the saying, *πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευσόμεθα καὶ μονὴν παρ' αὐτῷ ποιησόμεθα* (v. 23). However, Coloe appears to overlook the general tenor of 14:1–6 in that the believers are taken by Jesus to a place that he has prepared for them in his Father's presence.⁵⁶⁴ The key question in 14:1–6 is Jesus' departure and how the disciples can follow him. Jesus' words of comfort in verses 1–6 is that he is going to the Father⁵⁶⁵ in order to prepare a place for them *after* his departure and that he will return for them so they could be with him.⁵⁶⁶ John emphasizes the language of travel in verses 1–6 with the following sayings: *πορεύομαι, τόπον, πάλιν ἔρχομαι, ὅπου εἰμι ἐγώ, ὅπου [ἐγώ] ὑπάγω, τὴν ὁδόν, ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα* (see also v. 12). Klink also affirms the future dimension of

⁵⁶¹ Coloe, *God Dwells*, citing 163; Coloe, *Dwelling*, 110, 146–48.

⁵⁶² Coloe maintains a parousian return even though she understands the *μοναὶ πολλαί* as relationships in the family of God. Coloe, *God Dwells*, 162–63, 174, 177; Coloe, *Dwelling*, 110–12, 146–48. Van der Watt also sees 14:2–3 as teaching, "close relations within the house or family in which the believers will find themselves. They will really *come home*" (italics original). Van der Watt, *Family*, 347.

⁵⁶³ So Lincoln, *John*, 389–90, 395–96. In 14:2–3, Lincoln sees a traditional eschatology of a parousian return; while in 14:23 he sees God and Jesus coming to dwell with believers.

⁵⁶⁴ Coloe, *God Dwells*, 160–67.

⁵⁶⁵ See also John 12:26; 13:36; 14:6; 16:5, 10, 28; 17:11, 13, 24.

⁵⁶⁶ Harris, *John*, 255.

14:2–3, explaining that to argue that it refers to God’s presence “by means of the people of God is to reverse the movement of the entire Gospel. No, it is the people of God who one day will be with the Father, just as the Son—the Word—in the beginning was ‘with God.’”⁵⁶⁷ Thus, to interpret *μοναὶ πολλαί* as anything other than dwelling places in God’s presence is to miss the flow of thought—that Jesus is going to the Father and he will return for his disciples.⁵⁶⁸

Second, it is reasonable to view heaven as the locale of the Father’s house with many rooms because of Jesus’ reply to Thomas’ question in 14:5. Thomas is depicted as saying to Jesus: “We do not know where you are going, how will we know the way?” Jesus does not respond with directions to the physical temple, but rather speaks of himself as the path to the Father. Although the only two other NT references to “my Father’s house” refer to the Jerusalem temple (Luke 2:49; John 2:16), in John 14:2, if the phrase “my Father’s house” also refers to the Jerusalem temple then Thomas’ question is nonsensical because Thomas would know the way to the temple. However, since Jesus was speaking of leaving this world and going to the Father, it is reasonable to view heaven as the locale of the Father’s house.⁵⁶⁹

Third, in regard to Coloe’s argument concerning the redefinition of the temple from a physical structure to Jesus’ body to the community of believers, I contend that John’s terminology for the “temple” argues against the association of the temple imagery with the community of believers. Coloe understands *οἰκία* in 14:2 as the household of God which is the community of believers indwelt by the Spirit with many interpersonal relationships (*μοναὶ*).⁵⁷⁰ Coloe points to 1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; and Eph 2:21 to support the claim that the temple has been redefined in GJohn as the people of God.⁵⁷¹ However, in all of these passages, the noun *ναός*—rather than *οἰκία* or the cognate *οἶκος*—is used to explain the Christian community as God’s temple. To refer to the temple as a building, the NT writers use

⁵⁶⁷ Edward W. Klink, *John*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, ZECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 615.

⁵⁶⁸ Schnackenburg similarly points to a future home of the disciples with Jesus. Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:361; 3:59–62.

⁵⁶⁹ McCaffrey, *House with Many Rooms*, 30–31.

⁵⁷⁰ Coloe, *God Dwells*, 160–67.

three terms—*ἱερόν*, *οἶκος*, and *ναός*.⁵⁷² To refer to Jesus' body as the temple only *ναός* is used.⁵⁷³ And the NT writers use only *ναός* to describe the community of believers as the temple of God that is indwelt by the Spirit (1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21). Yet John does not use *ναός* in 14:2; rather he uses *οἶκός*. Indeed, some NT writers use *οἶκος*, though not *οἶκός* (1 Tim 3:15; Heb 3:6; 10:21; 1 Pet 2:5; 4:17) to refer to the church as the household of God; but in none of these passages are the notions of indwelling by God/Jesus/Spirit associated with the household of God as the family of God. When we consider John's terminology, three words frame the discussion about the temple—*ἱερόν*, *ναός*, and *οἶκος* (2:13–22). The term *ἱερόν* always refers to the physical temple in GJohn. The noun *ναός* is used exclusively for Jesus' body (2:19–21). The term *οἶκος* refers to the physical temple (2:16, 17) and to a house (7:53; 11:20). Additionally, the noun *οἶκος* refers to the house as a dwelling place (11:31; 12:3), to the members of a household (4:53),⁵⁷⁴ and perhaps to a household (8:35);⁵⁷⁵ but *οἶκος* does not refer to a temple. In sum, John distinguishes in his terminology between the temple of God (*ἱερόν* and *οἶκος*), Jesus' body (*ναός*), and the idea of a household (*οἶκος*). Based on the above passages, I maintain that Coloe's conclusion that *οἶκος* in John 14:2 refers to the “indwelling of the Father, Jesus and the Paraclete with the believer,”⁵⁷⁶ is not supported by the NT passages that refer to the church as the temple of God, because the NT texts use *ναός* instead of *οἶκος/οἶκος*. Moreover, as shown above, the NT writers do not use *οἶκος* but only *οἶκος* to refer to the church as the household of God, but devoid of the notion of the indwelling by God/Jesus/Spirit. Consequently, I propose that *οἶκος* in John 14:2 refers to the heavenly abode with God, rather than to the Jerusalem temple or to the community of believers indwelt by the Spirit.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 169–71.

⁵⁷² E.g., *ναός*—Matt 27:51=Mk 15:38=Luke 23:45; *οἶκος*—Matt 12:4; *ἱερόν*—Matt 4:5.

⁵⁷³ John 2:19–21=Matt 26:61=27:40=Mark 14:58=15:29.

⁵⁷⁴ In the rest of the NT, *οἶκος* refers to the members of a household in Matt 12:25=Mark 3:25–27; Mark 6:4; Acts 17:5; 1 Cor 16:15; Phil 4:22, and to an earthly and heavenly body (2 Cor 5:1), while over 80 uses refer to a physical house.

⁵⁷⁵ Coloe, *God Dwells*, 161; Robert Gundry, “In My Father's House are Many *Monai* (John 14:2),” *ZNW* 58 (1967): 71.

The fourth reason to understand 14:2 as referring to a heavenly locale is that “my father’s house” and the term *μονή* appear in the Second Temple Jewish literature in reference to the heavenly dwelling place with God. The saying “father’s house” in Philo refers to heaven as a paternal house to which a sojourner returns after this life.⁵⁷⁷ In 1 Macc 7:38 we encounter *μονή* in reference to a place in God’s presence.⁵⁷⁸ In this passage, Nicanor mocks the Jewish priests and elders. The Jewish people respond with a prayer to God soliciting him to kill the enemies and “not give them an abiding place” (*μὴ δῶς αὐτοῖς μονήν*). The prayer calls for vengeance, death, remembrance of their mockery and a plea not to permit them to have a place of abiding. I interpret this to be a request for permanent cessation of life due to (1) the increasing severity of these petitions and (2) an appeal for God to remember their offenses against the Jewish people and to respond with judgment. This prayer parallels John 3:36, where John uses the verb *μένω* to describe the presence of God’s wrath on the individual who does not believe in the Son and thereby forfeits the gift of eternal life. In light of John 3:36, it is possible to understand the Maccabean prayer as a request for eternal death in contrast to the perpetual existence with God. In addition to 1 Macc 7:38, the concept of a long-term dwelling place is also seen in Josephus’s use of *μονήν* in his description of Jonathan’s restoration of his residence in Jerusalem (*Ant.* 13.41).⁵⁷⁹

First Enoch similarly provides evidence that heaven was the referent for “dwelling places.” The contribution from 1 Enoch to our study of John 14:2–3 is conceptual rather than lexical in that the only surviving copies of the passage that

⁵⁷⁶ Coloe, *God Dwells*, 163; Coloe, *Dwelling*, 110.

⁵⁷⁷ Philo writes: “For so shalt thou be able also to return to thy father’s house (εἰς τὸν πατρῷον οἶκον), and be quit of that long endless distress which besets thee in a foreign land.” *Somn.* 1.256 (Colson and Whitaker, LCL).

⁵⁷⁸ 1 Macc 7:38 is the only usage of *μονή* in the LXX. It reads, *ποίησον ἐκδίκησιν ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τούτῳ καὶ ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ αὐτοῦ, καὶ πεσέτωσαν ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ, μνησθητι τῶν δυσφημιῶν αὐτῶν καὶ μὴ δῶς αὐτοῖς μονήν*. My translation: Take vengeance on this man and on his army and let them fall by the sword, remember their blasphemies and do not give them an abiding place.

⁵⁷⁹ Josephus writes: “So Jonathan took up his residence (*τὴν μονήν ἐποιεῖτο*) in Jerusalem, making various repairs in the city and arranging everything according to his own liking. Thus he ordered the walls of the city also to be built of square stones in order that they might be more secure against the enemy.” Josephus, *Ant.* 13.41 (Thackeray and Marcus, LCL).

refers to “dwelling places” are in Ethiopic rather than Greek.⁵⁸⁰ However, there is evidence that the NT writers were aware of this composite work, its several parts being written between fourth century BCE to the first century CE,⁵⁸¹ because allusions to 1 Enoch appear in the NT writings (e.g., 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 1:14–15) and in other early Christian writings.⁵⁸² It is possible that the ideas contained in 1 Enoch that refer to the heavenly dwelling places were known to the author of GJohn. In 1 En. 39:4–8 we read:

(4) There I saw other *dwelling places*⁵⁸³ of the holy ones, and their resting places too. (5) So there my eyes saw their *dwelling places* with the holy angels, and their resting places with the holy ones and they interceded and petitioned and prayed on behalf of the children of the people, and righteousness flowed before them like water, and mercy like dew upon the earth, and thus it is in their midst forever and ever. (6) And in those days my eyes saw the Elect One of righteousness and of faith, and righteousness shall prevail in his days, and the righteous and elect ones shall be without number before him forever and ever. (7) And I saw a *dwelling place* underneath the wings of the Lord of the Spirits; and all the righteous and the elect before him shall be as intense as the light of fire. Their mouth shall be full of blessing; and their lips will praise the name of the Lord of the Spirits, and righteousness before him will have no end; and uprightness before him will not cease. (8) There (underneath his wings) I wanted to *dwell*; and my soul desired that *dwelling place*. Already my portion is

⁵⁸⁰ James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1st ed., 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 6.

⁵⁸¹ Kelly Coblenz Bautch, “Enoch, First Book of,” *NIDB*, 258; George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Enoch, First Book Of,” *ABD*, 508–16. For critical works on 1 Enoch, see Craig A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 29–30.

⁵⁸² Isaac in Charlesworth’s *OT Pseudepigrapha* observes that “it [1 Enoch] influenced Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, Hebrews, 1 John, Jude (which quotes it directly), and Revelation (with numerous points of contact). There is little doubt that 1 Enoch was influential in molding New Testament doctrines concerning the nature of the Messiah, the Son of Man, the messianic kingdom, demonology, the future, resurrection, final judgment, the whole eschatological theater, and symbolism.” Moreover, 1 En. was used in Barn., Apoc. Pet., and known to Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. He suggests that “few other apocryphal books so indelibly marked the religious history and thought of the time of Jesus.” Charlesworth, ed. *OT Pseudepigrapha*, 8, 10. See NA27 for additional allusions to 1 Enoch in the NT.

⁵⁸³ Charles translates this phrase as “the mansions of the holy and the resting-places of the righteous.” The remaining mentions of “dwelling place” agree with references in Isaac’s account. R. H. Charles and August Dillmann, *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893), 115–17.

there; for thus has it been reserved for me before the Lord of the Spirits (*italics mine*).⁵⁸⁴

Heaven seems to be the setting of the fourfold use of “dwelling places” and the singular use of “dwell” which further supports the Jewish expectation of dwelling in heaven with God. Isaac notes that the above passage appears in the section from 1 Enoch called Similitudes (chs. 37–71) in which the author develops the themes of “the coming judgment of the righteous and the wicked; the Messiah, the Son of Man, the Righteous One, and the Elect One; the exposition of additional heavenly secrets; the measuring of Paradise; the resurrection of the righteous; and the punishment of the fallen angels.”⁵⁸⁵ Thus, certain thematic parallels with GJohn warrant the inclusion of 1 En. 38:4–8 as support for our study of John 14:2–3.

The writer of 2 Enoch also discusses heavenly dwelling places. Admittedly, the only surviving manuscripts of 2 Enoch are in Slavonic and there is no consensus among scholars on its dating, opinions ranging from the first century BCE to the tenth century CE.⁵⁸⁶ However, because of the apocalyptic nature of this pseudepigraphical document and the parallel themes of dwelling places as heavenly residences in 1 En. 38:4–8 with 2 En. 61:2–3 and with John 14:2–3, it is possible that 2 Enoch may serve as a further witness to the use of the equivalent terminology as mentioned also in GJohn.⁵⁸⁷ Charlesworth notes that the first half of 2 Enoch (chs. 1–68) primarily consists of eschatological material that “describes how Enoch was taken up to the Lord through the seven heavens and then returned to report to his family what he had learned.”⁵⁸⁸ It is in this eschatological section of 2 Enoch that the writer mentions houses in the future age. In 2 En. 61:2–3 we read:

That which a person makes request from the LORD for his own soul,
in the same manner let him behave toward every living soul, because
in the great age many shelters have been prepared for people, very
good houses, bad houses without number. Happy is he who enters into

⁵⁸⁴ Translation from Charlesworth, ed. *OT Pseudepigrapha*, 1:30–31.

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁸⁶ Francis I. Andersen, “Enoch, Second Book Of,” *ABD*, 2:520–21; Charlesworth, ed. *OT Pseudepigrapha*, 1:91–221; Evans, *Ancient Texts*, 30; Grant Macaskill, “Enoch, Second Book of,” *NIDB*, 261.

⁵⁸⁷ Keener notes that 2 Enoch may be a commentary on 1 Enoch. Keener, *John*, 935.

⁵⁸⁸ Charlesworth, ed. *OT Pseudepigrapha*, 1:91.

the blessed dwellings; and indeed in the bad ones there is no conversion.⁵⁸⁹

On account of the references to the heavenly place as an abode in God's presence in Philo, 1 Maccabees, Josephus, 1 Enoch, and 2 Enoch, I contend that the term *μοναὶ* in John 14:2 likely refers to dwelling places in heaven that are prepared for the disciples.⁵⁹⁰ Jesus' words to his troubled disciples were meant to convey a promise to "prepare for them the universal and permanent possibility of an abiding communion with his Father"⁵⁹¹ in the same locale as Jesus. In light of the repeated present tense command in 14:1 "to believe," I read the promise of abiding in verses 2–3 as a compensatory benefit that is conferred on faithful disciples because it declares to the believer that her relationship with Jesus continues into the eternal future where she will dwell with Jesus and with the Father permanently.⁵⁹²

3.3.2.2 *John 14:15–24*

The benefit of abiding is not only reserved for the future, however; for the disciple experiences the abiding presence of the Father and the Son also in the present. Here I argue that in 14:23 *μονήν* refers to the abiding relationship between God, Jesus, and the believer by means of the Paraclete in a time that precedes the eschaton.⁵⁹³ I suggest that the term *μονή* bears two different but corresponding referents in GJohn—in 14:2–3 it refers to the future dwelling with God, and in 14:23 it refers to the Father and the Son through the Spirit making a home with the believer in the present. In 14:23, John writes: "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my

⁵⁸⁹ Similarly 2 En. 65:10 refers to future eternal dwelling places as reward for the righteous. The passage reads: "But they will have a great light, a great indestructible light, and paradise, great and incorruptible. For everything corruptible will pass away, and the incorruptible will come into being, and will be the shelter of the eternal residences." Translation from *ibid.*, 1:192.

⁵⁹⁰ So Beasley-Murray, *John*, 249–51; Klink, *John*, 614–15, 659; Lincoln, *John*, 389–90, 395–96; Moloney, *John*, 394; Segovia, *Farewell*, 82 fn. 45; Thompson, *John*, 307–8; Westcott, *John*, 200. Cf. Barrett, who rejects any eschatological significance in 14:2–3, and 23. Barrett, *John*, 456–57, 466.

⁵⁹¹ Moloney, *John*, 394.

⁵⁹² Tolmie affirms the eschatological fulfillment of the promise in 14:2–3 as a motivation for discipleship but he does not delve into the different interpretations of the fulfillment of this promise. Tolmie, *Farewell*, 203–4.

⁵⁹³ Pace Moloney, who sees the future tenses in 14:23 as promising a future eschatological abiding relationship with the Father, Son, and the believer. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 259–60; Moloney, *John*, 404–405. Köstenberger notes that this is the only place in the NT where the Father and the Son are both said to indwell believers. Köstenberger, *John*, 441.

Father will love him and we will come to him and make our dwelling place (μονήν) with him.” John addresses the timing of this promise in 14:18, where he writes: “I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you,” and in 14:20, “In that day (ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ) you will know that I am in my Father and you in me, and I in you.” Scholars have explained the timing of this promise in three primary ways. First, some view the saying ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ as Jesus’ post-resurrection appearance to his disciples;⁵⁹⁴ however, this view undermines Jesus’ promise not to leave his disciples as orphans in 14:18, which would necessarily occur after his ascension. The second interpretation of ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ is in reference to the parousia as supposed by the early church fathers.⁵⁹⁵ However, as with the first interpretation, the disciples would be orphans in the time between Jesus’ ascension and before his parousia. Moreover, Bennema notes that in verse 19, John states that the world will not see Jesus while the disciples will, which contradicts the appearance of Jesus at parousia when everyone is expected to see him (e.g., Rev 1:7).⁵⁹⁶

The third option is to understand ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ as Jesus’ coming through the Paraclete.⁵⁹⁷ Brown explains that the promise of Jesus to return (14:18) was initially fulfilled in Jesus’ appearances to his disciples after the resurrection and subsequently through the presence of the Paraclete.⁵⁹⁸ In this sense, the Paraclete continues the work of Jesus, the first Paraclete. This interpretation coheres with the references to ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ in 16:23 and 26, since in both verses the disciples are

⁵⁹⁴ Barrett, *John*, 464; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 258–59; Farely, *Disciples*, 72; Lincoln, *John*, 395; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:430; 3:76–77, 159.

⁵⁹⁵ Brown, *John*, 645–46. Chennattu critiques the eschatological understanding of 14:23 in favor of the Paraclete mediating God’s and Jesus’ presence because the eschatological view does not seriously consider the subject of ποιησόμεθα as being the Father and Jesus rather than the disciples who will make a μονήν. Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 105–6.

⁵⁹⁶ Bennema, *Power*, 222–23 fn. 45.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid., 222–23; Brown, *John*, 645–46; Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 105–6; Haenchen et al., *John*, 2:126–28; Keener, *John*, 2:974; Segovia, *Love*, 154; Tolmie, *Farewell*, 206–10. Bultmann merges the parousia, Easter, and the coming of the Paraclete into a single event described in vv. 18–20. Bultmann, *Theology*, 2:57. Surprisingly, while Chennattu makes God’s dwelling with his people one of the key principles of the covenant motif that John picks up from the OT, Chennattu does not engage in much detail the different interpretations of 14:2–3 and 14:17–23. Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 43–44, 61, 83–84, 103–4.

⁵⁹⁸ Brown, *John*, 645–46. Similarly, Coloe, *God Dwells*, 174–76; Harris, *John*, 261–62, 281; Thompson, *John*, 314–16, esp. fn. 82.

encouraged to bring their requests directly to God in the name of Jesus, which implies that Jesus is not present with them when they bring their requests to God, since they would otherwise bring their requests directly to Jesus. This understanding leaves open the possibility of a future parousia as argued above from 14:2–3 because none of the mentions of ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ (14:20; 16:23, 26) prohibit another return of Jesus after the Paraclete is given. It seems reasonable to understand the three Johannine uses of ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ as references to the coming of the Paraclete after Jesus' resurrection, and so to understand 14:2–3 as the promise of Jesus' future return.⁵⁹⁹

Brown affirms that Jesus initially returns after the resurrection and subsequently in the form of the Paraclete (14:18–20). Brown further argues that the Paraclete is the presence of Jesus.⁶⁰⁰ The correspondence between the ministries of Jesus and the Paraclete (e.g., knowledge, teaching, guiding, announcing, witnessing), and the description of each (e.g., both come, are sent, are given, hated by the world) led Brown to conclude that, “since the Paraclete can come only when Jesus departs, the Paraclete is the presence of Jesus when Jesus is absent” (12:26; 14:2–3; 17:24).⁶⁰¹ The promise in 14:16 is that the Paraclete will be with the disciples forever. And according to 14:23, the Father and Jesus are said to abide with the believer. Thus, perhaps we can designate this abiding with the believer as triadic abiding—Jesus (14:2–3, 20, 23; 15:4; 17:21), the Spirit (14:16–17), and the Father (14:2–3, 23; 17:21). Bennema explains that the relational aspect of abiding between the believer, the Father, and the Son is to be experienced through the agency of the Spirit. Bennema writes:

The Paraclete will mediate, as the mode of communication, Jesus' presence and life to the believer so that they will 'see', i.e., perceive, Jesus and participate in his life (14.18–19). Thus, we suggest that the indwelling of the believer by the Father and Son (14.23) is (experienced by) the indwelling of the believer by the Paraclete (14.17).⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁹ Tolmie also allows for both options. Tolmie, *Farewell*, 203–4, 209.

⁶⁰⁰ Raymond E. Brown, “The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel,” *NTS* 13 (1967): 128.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 126–28, citing 128.

⁶⁰² Bennema, *Power*, 222–23. Similarly, Lincoln, *John*, 396.

John previously discussed the theme of God and Jesus dwelling with the believer (1:14; 6:56), but in 14:17–23 the notion of God dwelling with the disciples is amplified in a triadic direction with the Father and the Son dwelling with the believer through the Spirit.

John frames triadic abiding in 14:15–24 to be a relational experience for the disciple by presenting it in the context of love for Jesus and the obedience to Jesus' commandments. John establishes this framework through the fourfold pairing of the verbs ἀγαπάω and τηρέω (vv. 15, 21, 23, 24). Each appearance of this pair of verbs communicates the same message—love for Jesus is expressed in the keeping of his commands (vv. 15, 21) and his words (vv. 23, 24). And as Kanagaraj notes: “John speaks of love and obedience as one single component in his theology of mutual indwelling (cf. 14.23) and they are presented as the highest mark of Christian life (13.35; 15.12–17).”⁶⁰³ The zenith manifestation of the link between love and abiding appears in 14:21–23, where Jesus promises to manifest himself (ἐμφανίζω) to the individual who keeps his commands and who loves him. This special self-manifestation is further defined in verse 23 through Jesus' promise to make an abode jointly with the Father in that individual's life. Chennattu connects ἐμφανίζω to Exod 33:13, 18 and points out covenantal overtones in Jesus' promise to manifest himself, which can be likened to Moses seeing God's glory.⁶⁰⁴ Chennattu's parallel is appropriate in light of John 1:14–17 where we read of the Logos functioning as the revelation of the glory of God that is in the tradition of Moses. The disciple's participation in this revelation and the abiding of the Father and the Son through the Spirit with the disciple is contingent upon the disciple's demonstration of love through obedience to Jesus' commands. John stresses the importance of love and obedience to abiding by linking the promise of abiding to the disciple's love for and obedience to Jesus (vv. 23a, 24a).

The pairing of love and abiding appears also in 15:9–10. John writes, “Just as the Father loved me, I also loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my

⁶⁰³ Jey J. Kanagaraj, *'Mysticism' in the Gospel of John: An Inquiry into its Background*, JSNTSup 158 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 268.

⁶⁰⁴ Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 107–8.

commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." Jesus commands his disciples to remain in his love, which is accomplished through obedience to his commands (14:15). The paradigm for fulfilling this command is Jesus' obedience to the Father, which proves that Jesus remains in the Father's love and knows the Father (8:55). In 17:26, John indicates that the Father's love for the Son will be replicated in the Father's love for the disciples, which will result in Jesus' presence with the disciples. The benefit of abiding then is inseparable from the requirement of love that the disciples are to manifest to one another (13:34) and toward Jesus (14:15).

In addition to the love between Jesus and the Father functioning paradigmatically for the disciples, John portrays the mutual abiding between the Son and the Father as a model for the abiding between the disciples and the Son and the Father. In 14:10, John identifies Jesus' works as evidence of the Father abiding with the Son. Then in verse 12, Jesus promises to his disciples that they will do greater works than he performed. Subsequently, in 14:20 Jesus affirms, "I am in my Father, and you are in me and I am also in you." We can conclude from these three declarations that the reciprocal abiding between Jesus and the Father empowered Jesus to do his works, and that the disciples' abiding with Jesus will empower them to perform even greater works (14:12). Thus, these greater works performed by the disciples will confirm that the disciples are experiencing a similar kind of abiding with the Father that was experienced by Jesus with the Father.

John presents abiding as a benefit that is enjoyed by a continuous follower of Jesus both in the present (14:15–24)⁶⁰⁵ and in the future (14:2–3). In the present, the Spirit mediates the abiding of the Son and the Father to the disciple. The mutual abiding between the Father and the Son is paradigmatic for the abiding that is promised to the disciple for continuously believing in Jesus (note the present tense imperatives in 14:1). As Jesus' abiding in the Father was confirmed by his obedience

⁶⁰⁵ In her extensive discussion of Johannine abiding, Pazdan does not delve into the question of the eschatological fulfillment of this promise. While her overall thesis is that "the possession of eternal life is a present but limited experience of the disciple," in reference to abiding she focuses on the present aspects of abiding which she defines as an "existential experience of union, shared life and

to the Father, so would a disciple's abiding with the Son be confirmed by the disciple's obedience to the Son's teaching. And the longevity of this abiding relationship is addressed by Jesus in his prayer: "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (17:24).

3.3.3 The Condition and the Benefits of Abiding in Jesus

In this section⁶⁰⁶ I focus on 15:1–11⁶⁰⁷ where, in the context of fruit-bearing (15:2, 4, 5, 8, 16),⁶⁰⁸ John develops the disciple's abiding in Jesus as a condition that the

presence" between the disciple and Jesus. She then suggests that abiding entails "knowing, loving, seeking, and finding [Jesus]." Pazdan, "Discipleship," citing 308–9, 315, see also 210–36, 315–16.
⁶⁰⁶ I follow the majority of the commentators who defend 15:1–17 as a unit that is distinct within the FD because of the repetition of the themes of fruit, love, commandment, and answered requests. I further divide 15:1–17 into vv. 1–11 (abiding) and vv. 12–17 (friendship) and discuss my rationale in §4.6.2. For 15:1–17 as a unit, see Barrett, *John*, 470–83; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 223; Brown, *John*, 658–702; Bultmann, *John*, 529–47; Coloe, *Dwelling*, 151; Harris, *John*, 266–75; Lincoln, *John*, 401–14; Thompson, *John*, 322–30. For the relationship between abiding and vine imagery, see J. Becker, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, 2 vols., ÖTK 4/1–2 (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn; Würzburg: Echter: 1979–81), 2:482; Bennema, *Power*, 140; Coloe, *Dwelling*, 157; Francis J. Moloney, *Glory not Dishonor: Reading John 13–21* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1998), 56–57; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, Rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 592–600. The standard works on John 15 are C. P. Bammel, "Farewell Discourse in Patristic Exegesis," *Neot* 25 no. 2 (1991): 193–207; Rainer Borig, *Der wahre Weinstock: Untersuchungen zu Jo 15, 1–10*, SANT 16 (München: Kösel, 1967); William R. Domeris, "The Farewell Discourse: An Anthropological Perspective," *Neot* 25 no. 2 (1991): 233–50; J. A. Du Rand, "Perspectives on Johannine Discipleship According to the Farewell Discourses," *Neot* 25 no. 2 (1991): 311–25; P. J. Hartin, "Remain in me (John 15:5): The Foundation of the Ethical and its Consequences in the Farewell Discourses," *Neot* 25 no. 2 (1991): 341–56; Jürgen Heise, *Bleiben: Menein in den Johanneischen Schriften* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1967), 80–92; George Johnston, "The Allegory of the Vine: An Exposition of John 15:1–17," *CJT* 3/4 (1957/58): 150–58; Segovia, "Theology and Provenance," 115–28; Segovia, "John 15:18–16:4a: A First Addition to the Original Farewell Discourse?," 210–30; Segovia, *Farewell*; J. C. De Smidt, "A Perspective on John 15:1–8," *Neot* 25 no. 2 (1991): 251–72.

⁶⁰⁷ Scholars have aptly treated questions concerning redaction criticism, source criticism, and the conceptual background of 15:1–17, thus my treatment is focused on the relationship between abiding and discipleship in 15:1–17. Scholars have also drawn different theological motifs from John 15. For ecclesiological motifs, see Köstenberger, *Missions*, 164, 169; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:211–12. For eschatological themes, see Ford, *Redeemer-Friend*, 161. For christological themes, see Anne Jaubert, "L'image de la vigne (Jean 15)," in *Oikonomia: Heilsgeschichte als Thema der Theologie*, ed. Felix Christ (Hamburg–Bergstedt: Herbert Reich Evang. Verlag GmbH, 1967), 97; Andrew Streett, *The Vine and the Son of Man* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014), 219. Chennattu suggests the OT covenant background with Jesus and the disciples being depicted by John as the true Israel and the new vineyard for Yahweh. Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 114. For redaction criticism of 15:1–17, see Brown, *John*, 666–67; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:89–93; Segovia, *Love*, 81–101; Segovia, *Farewell*. For source critical study of John 15, see Borig, who views the narrative as having parabolic and allegorical features, and has concluded that the Jewish background is most plausible. Borig, *Der wahre*

disciple must fulfill to demonstrate her commitment to Jesus and to experience additional benefits. Since John associates this condition for the disciple to abide in Jesus with bearing fruit, the discussion below will first consider five aspects of bearing fruit that relate to abiding and to discipleship. Then, the discussion will proceed to analyze the corollary benefits the disciple will experience if she fulfills the condition of abiding in Jesus.

3.3.3.1 Abiding in Jesus as a Condition in John 15:1–11

John reveals five aspects of bearing fruit that relate to abiding and to discipleship. John presents fruit as a benefit (e.g., 15:5, 8, 16) and as a condition (e.g., 15:2). First, fruit-bearing is the result of abiding in Jesus. Thompson observes that the disciple is not commanded to bear fruit but to remain in Jesus, which will result in fruit (v. 4).⁶⁰⁹ John stresses the abiding relationship with Jesus as follows: μέινετε ἐν ἐμοί (v. 4); ἐὰν μὴ μένῃ ἐν τῇ ἀμπέλῳ (vv. 4, 6); ἐὰν μὴ ἐν ἐμοί μένητε (v. 4); ὁ μένων ἐν ἐμοί (v. 5); μένῃ ἐν ἐμοί (v. 6); μένητε ἐν ἐμοί (v. 7); τὰ ῥήματά μου ἐν ὑμῖν μένῃ (v. 7); μέινετε ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ τῇ ἐμῇ (v. 9); and μενεῖτε ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ μου (v. 10). The interplay between the aorist and the present tenses is noteworthy. John begins with the aorist imperative, μέινετε ἐν ἐμοί (v. 4), to stress the urgency⁶¹⁰ of the disciple's need to remain in Jesus in order to bear fruit since the branch that does not bear fruit is removed (vv. 2, 6). Then John proceeds from the aorist to the present subjunctive μένητε (vv. 4b, 6) and to the present participle, ὁ μένων (v. 5) and thereby stresses the continuous nature of fruit-bearing that characterizes every genuine disciple (v. 8).

Weinstock: *Untersuchungen zu Jo 15, 1–10, 19–194*. Bultmann suggests Gnostic and Mandaean sources. Bultmann, *John*, 530, fns. 3,4,5. The following passages have been suggested as background texts to 15:1–17: Isa 5:1–7; 27:2–6; Jer 2:21; 6:9; 8:13; 12:10; Ezek 15:1–8; 17:1–10; 19:10–14; Hos 10:1; Ps 80; Sir 24:17–21; 2 Esdr 5:23; 2 Bar 36–40. Barrett, *John*, 472; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 272; Brown, *John*, 669–70; Carson, *John*, 513; Keener, *John*, 988–93; Köstenberger, *John*, 449–50, fn. 6; Lincoln, *John*, 402; Moloney, *John*, 419; Morris, *John*, 593; Stanislaw Pisarek, “Christ the Son and the Father-Farmer in the Image of the Vine (Jn 15.1–11, 12–17),” in *Testimony and Interpretation: Early Christology in its Judeo-Hellenistic Milieu: Studies in Honor of Petr Pokorný*, ed. Jiri Mrazek and Jan Roskovec (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 243; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:104–6; Thompson, *John*, 322–24; Van der Watt, *Family*, 51, fn. 123; Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 255.

⁶⁰⁸ Fruit is also mentioned in 4:36 and 12:24, both of which appear in the context of mission.

⁶⁰⁹ Thompson, *John*, 325.

⁶¹⁰ Harris, *John*, 267.

The repetition of the conditional conjunction *ἐάν* with a negative particle *μή* (in vv. 4, 6, *ἐάν μή μένη*) further stresses the need for continual abiding of a disciple in Jesus, inasmuch as this determines whether one will produce fruit or fail to produce fruit, and, in effect, whether one will enjoy the benefits of following Jesus or suffer the consequences for ceasing to follow Jesus.⁶¹¹ John returns to the aorist in verse 7 (*μείνητε...μείνη*) and shifts from the third person *τις* (v. 6) to the second person (*ἐάν μείνητε*, v. 7) to address the disciples directly and to reiterate the personal nature of abiding in Jesus, and the urgency of such a relationship in light of the consequences incurred by someone who fails to abide continually in Jesus. The dependence on Jesus for fruit-bearing is stressed in the repeated negative *οὐ δύνασθε ποιεῖν οὐδέν*, which is John's emphatic declaration that a disciple can do "nothing at all"⁶¹² apart from abiding in Jesus.

Second, John associates fruit-bearing with keeping Jesus' words and obeying his commandments which continues the disciple's abiding in Jesus. The importance of Jesus' words to the relationship with Jesus has been noted before (5:38; 8:31, 37, 51), including in this passage where Jesus' word is the agent of the disciples' cleansing (v. 3). In 15:7–8, John reiterates the significance of Jesus' words to abiding with him which results in answered requests, bearing much fruit, and in affirmation of genuine discipleship. Then, in verses 9–10, John introduces love and the keeping of Jesus' commands as a necessary trait to abiding in Jesus. John's promise is that the keeping of the commandments will lead to abiding in Jesus' love (future tense, *μενεῖτε ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ μου*, v. 10). John then portrays Jesus as an example of abiding in God's love as expressed in obedience to the Father's commandments (v. 10; 8:55).⁶¹³

Third, this discussion naturally leads into the question of the nature of fruit: What precisely is fruit and how does it manifest itself? In the context of chapter 15, John suggests that fruit manifests itself in relation to Jesus in a variety of ways—love, obedience, participation in mission, and witnessing. Coloe sees fruit as "the

⁶¹¹ Schnackenburg observes that these linguistic variations are typical in GJohn and accent the same principle of abiding. Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:100.

⁶¹² Harris, *John*, 267.

reality of disciples loving one another, and so in their communion-in-love they are a living symbol of the divine *communio*, the household of God.”⁶¹⁴ Brown also sees love as the referent for fruit that flows from faith in Christ and is channeled toward other believers.⁶¹⁵ To be sure, one expression of “fruit” is love and Jesus’ declaration to give up his life as a love act for his beloved friends is exemplary of the type of love he expects his followers to produce (15:13; 12:24–26). Jesus’ love then becomes the standard against which the disciples are to measure their love.⁶¹⁶

Although love is a prominent theme in 15:9–10 and 12–17, there is no explicit statement in 15:1–17 that demands that love be equated with fruit. Additionally, since in both of the other occurrences of fruit in GJohn the meaning is in the context of mission (4:36; 12:24), the Johannine notion of fruit can be understood as a general expression of commitment to Jesus with diverse manifestations, among which would be love, obedience, participation in mission, and witnessing. Schnackenburg similarly notes that “the fruit” should not be restricted to love, but that it should be understood broadly to include “all the fruits of a Christian life lived in close union with Christ and especially of a ‘fruitful’ community life which bears witness to itself in faith and love.”⁶¹⁷ In sum, Barrett rightly states, “Bearing fruit is simply living the life of a Christian disciple.”⁶¹⁸

Fourth, John articulates that the result of a lack of fruit-bearing is judgment and destruction. John introduces the image of judgment in 15:2 by denoting the fruitless branches that are removed and then, in verse 6, by comparing these branches to the disciples who do not abide in Jesus and are, therefore, cast off, wither, are gathered, are thrown into the fire and are burned. Lee explains that, “Without adherence to the vine, without pruning and sculpting by the vinedresser, the branches

⁶¹³ Segovia writes, “because he, Jesus, fulfilled the commands of the Father (τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ πατρός μου τηρήρηκα), he abides in the Father’s love.” Segovia, *Love*, 109.

⁶¹⁴ Coloe, *Dwelling*, 162.

⁶¹⁵ Brown, *John*, 676.

⁶¹⁶ Segovia lists five love relationships in vv. 9–17: (1) the Father’s love for Jesus, (2) Jesus’ love for the disciples, (3) Jesus’ love for the Father, (4) the disciples’ love for Jesus, and (5) the disciples’ love for one another. Jesus’ love for the disciples becomes the ground for the disciples’ love for each other. Segovia, *Love*, 189–92.

⁶¹⁷ Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:100.

wither and die; they die of isolation and neglect and their only use is as firewood.”⁶¹⁹ Hauck observes the long lasting effects of not abiding in Jesus as the counterpart to abiding in him. Hauck writes: “Here again the relationship of salvation is both enduring and present. The same is true of perdition. Unbelievers abide in darkness (Jn. 12:46) and death (1 Jn. 3:14).”⁶²⁰ In contrast to the fruitless branches, the fruitful branches glorify the Father with much fruit, which is a demonstration of authentic abiding in Jesus and in his love (15:8). To these disciples John portrays Jesus as declaring that their fruit evidences their abiding in him (v. 5) and in the end, abiding protects them from separation from Jesus’ abiding presence (v. 6).

Fifth, the fruit-bearing of the true disciple glorifies the Father. The importance of the disciple’s fruit-bearing to the Father is evident in the Father’s personal involvement in the process. To enhance the productivity of the branches, the vinedresser/Father prunes the productive branches (v. 2) and removes the dead branches (vv. 2, 6).⁶²¹ The goal is that the branches “remain attached to the vine, vigorous, healthy, drawing life, and producing fruit.”⁶²² It is noteworthy that it is the Father who is glorified rather than Jesus, even though Jesus is the means through which the fruit is produced. Brown explains the Father’s rather than Jesus’ glorification in this way: “Since the disciples continue the work of the Son and remain united to him, there is only one mission shared by the Son and his disciples. In this one mission the Father is glorified.”⁶²³ Thus John features God’s involvement in the disciple’s continuous fruit-bearing (vv. 2, 8, note the present tense of φέρω), which glorifies the Father (v. 8).

⁶¹⁸ Barrett, *John*, 474. Similarly, Kanagaraj who writes: “φέρειν καρπὸν... [denotes] all forms of Christian life lived in close communion with Christ.” Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 268.

⁶¹⁹ Lee, “Abiding,” 129.

⁶²⁰ Hauck, “Μένω,” *TDNT*, 4:576.

⁶²¹ Harris, *John*, 266. Notice the paronomasia between removing (αἶρει) and pruning (καθαίρει). Barrett, *John*, 473; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 268 note (a); Harris, *John*, 266.

⁶²² Thompson, *John*, 324.

⁶²³ Brown, *John*, 662.

3.3.3.2 The Benefits of Abiding in Jesus in John 15:1–11

John enhances his presentation on the need for the disciple to abide in Jesus and to produce fruit by presenting eight benefits: (1) the presence of the Paraclete, (2) peace, (3) joy, (4) answered requests, (5) love from Jesus, (6) confirmation of being a disciple of Jesus, (7) escape from judgment, and (8) performance of great works. The benefits escape from judgment (see §2.2.2.2b) and performance of greater works (see §2.2.3) have been previously examined, thus they will not be discussed below.

The first two benefits, Paraclete/Holy Spirit and peace, appear together and therefore will be treated jointly. John presents the Spirit as granting life (3:5–8; 6:63). The Holy Spirit is first promised to the believer in 7:39 (see discussion in §2.2.2.3b; §2.2.3) and again in the context of abiding (14:16–17, 26; 15:26; 16:7, 13). He is called the “Spirit of truth” (14:17; 15:26; 16:13) and the “Holy Spirit” (14:26). The general meaning of Paraclete (*παράκλητος*) carries a legal connotation of an attorney or an advocate (e.g., 1 John 2:1).⁶²⁴ However, in GJohn the allusion to Jesus as the former Paraclete⁶²⁵ and the presentation of the Spirit as the agent who discloses truth implies that “he does not function so much to advocate the disciples’ cause before God as to mediate the presence of Jesus to his disciples.”⁶²⁶ Concerning the disciples, the Spirit’s role is (1) to be with them forever (14:16, 17),⁶²⁷ (2) to teach them (14:26; 16:14), (3) to remind them about Jesus and his words (14:26), (4) to testify concerning Jesus (15:26), (5) to guide the disciples into the truth (16:13), (6) to glorify Jesus (16:14), and (7) to facilitate peace (14:26–27; 16:33; 20:19–23, 26). In 14:26, Jesus promises that the Father will send the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ name. Subsequently in verse 27 Jesus is portrayed as declaring “Peace I leave with you,”

⁶²⁴ Behm, “*παράκλητος*,” *TDNT*, 5:800–814; Smith, *John*, 274; Stibbe, *John*, 152.

⁶²⁵ Behm, “*παράκλητος*,” 5:800, fn. 1, 813.

⁶²⁶ Smith, *John*, 274. Lincoln furthers the mediatory role of the term *παράκλητος* when he explains that the most fitting translation of this term is “intercessor” as understood in the forensic context of Second Temple Jewish literature. The meaning of encourager and consoler can be supplementary but the idea of “advocate in a trial remains the core referent of the title ‘Paraclete.’” Lincoln, *John*, 393–5.

⁶²⁷ The distinction between the preposition in 14:17 in reference to the spirit being *with* (*παρά*) and *in* (*ἐν*) the disciples is seen by Beasley-Murray as having no significance while Schnackenburg sees it as a single figure of speech and argues that these prepositions should not be separated but rather should be understood as pointing to the “the Spirit’s inner presence in individual believers.” Beasley-Murray, *John*, 257–8; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:76.

which is immediately followed by the exhortation to his disciples not to let their hearts be troubled or fearful. Thus we can understand the Spirit as the mediator of peace which should quell all anxiety. In 16:33 peace is promised after the prediction of the coming of the Paraclete (16:23–27) to encourage the disciples not to be disturbed by the tribulation in the world because Jesus has overcome the world. This passage illustrates John’s deployment of benefits against the potential opposition from the world as John portrays Jesus encouraging his disciples to continue to believe in him (16:30–33). The final mention of peace is in 20:19–23 where it is once more juxtaposed with the presence of the Spirit. In this post-resurrection episode, John portrays Jesus as giving the Spirit to the disciples as Jesus charges them to continue his mission which includes forgiving sins.⁶²⁸ Here again, peace is in the context of turmoil, for the disciples had locked the doors “for fear of ‘the Jews.’” The benefit of the Spirit being given as part of the abiding relationship, on the one hand, yields peace, and on the other, as discussed above, the Spirit is the agent who maintains the abiding relationship in the present era between the Father, the Son, and the disciples.

The third and fourth benefits—joy and answered requests—are portrayed jointly by John in 14:13–14; 15:7–11; 16:20–24. In 15:11, John depicts Jesus as declaring that the reason for his exhortation to abide in him is so that the disciples experience complete joy (3:29; 16:20–24; 17:13). The present subjunctive of εἰμί in 15:11 (ἡ χαρὰ ἣ ἐμὴ ἐν ὑμῖν ᾗ) stresses the continual experience of the disciples’ joy that parallels Jesus’ experience of joy and joy that will be made full.⁶²⁹ According to the context, joy is obtained by remaining in Jesus (15:4), producing fruit (15:5, 8), remaining in his love through the keeping of his commands (15:9–10), and experiencing answered requests (15:7). The notion of answered requests, which serves as a motivation for joy, is also mentioned alongside complete joy in 16:20–24. In both passages (15:7; 16:24), the verb αἰτέω appears in the imperative mood to

⁶²⁸ Jesus greeting of peace to Thomas in 20:26 can perhaps be understood as Jesus’ inclusion of Thomas into the same promise of peace and the giving of the Spirit that was extended to the other disciples in verses 19–23.

⁶²⁹ Harris, *John*, 269.

exhort the disciples to be bold in their requests in order to experience joy through answered requests (15:11; 16:22–24). John also links answered requests with the Father being glorified by the Son as he answers the disciples’ requests (14:13–14). In 17:13 Jesus promises complete joy to his disciples even after he is gone. Bultmann understands this joy as having eschatological implications because this joy will not be taken from them (16:22).⁶³⁰ In 17:13 the promise of complete joy is bracketed with the promise of God’s protection (17:11, 15) and thus this joy is brought to completion with God’s personal care of the disciples.

The fifth benefit associated with abiding is love from the Father and Jesus (14:21–24; 15:9–10). John stresses the wholeness of the Father’s love for the Son and Jesus’ love for the disciples through the constative aorist in 15:9–10 (ἡγάπησέν... ἡγάπησα).⁶³¹ Jesus’ love for the disciples finds its origin in the Father’s love for the Son (note καθὼς... καὶ γὰρ in 15:9) that reflects the same intensity⁶³² and the same constancy (3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 14:21–23; 15:9; 17:23, 26). The importance of love to the relationship between Jesus and his followers is observable by the inclusio in the discussion of this love in the FD (13:1; 17:26). This love is contingent upon the disciples’ love, obedience, and belief in the Son (8:42, 45–46; 14:21–24; 15:10; 16:27). The urgency of the exhortation for the disciples to remain in Jesus’ love is expressed in the aorist imperative (μείνατε, 15:9);⁶³³ and the condition for maintaining (μενεῖτε) that love is keeping the commandments (14:21; 15:10) in the same manner that Jesus kept his Father’s commandments (8:55; 15:10). Jesus expects his disciples to love each other (13:34; 15:12, 17). The result of experiencing God’s love and not being orphaned is the presence of the Spirit (14:17, 26; 15:26),⁶³⁴

⁶³⁰ Bultmann, *John*, 505–7, 541. Similarly Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:104.

⁶³¹ Barrett, *John*, 475.

⁶³² Harris, *John*, 269.

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ Malherbe notes that the term “orphans” was used to describe ostracized Christians because of their faith. Malherbe points to Plato’s use of this term in reference to the disciples of Socrates who contemplated his upcoming death and felt orphaned. In Plato we read, “We felt that he was like a father to us and that when bereft of him we should pass the rest of our lives as orphans.” Plato, *Phaedo* 116A (Fowler, LCL). See Abraham J. Malherbe, “God’s New Family in Thessalonica,” in *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks*, eds. L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1995), 122; Van der Watt, *Family*, 369.

the Father, and the Son (14:20, 23). This benefit of love, however, is reserved for those who continue in their love for Jesus (14:15, 21–24; 15:10).

The sixth benefit of abiding is the confirmation of genuine discipleship by means of the disciple's fruit-bearing. In 15:8, John writes, "By this my Father is glorified that you bear (note the present tense of *φέρετε*) much fruit and become (*γένησθε*) my disciples." Segovia sees this verse as the climax of verses 1–7 since the epexegetical *ἵνα*-clause in verse 8 links the production of fruit with the glory of the Father and with the authenticity of discipleship.⁶³⁵ John makes "bearing much fruit" emphatic by placing "fruit" and "much" before the verb, *ἵνα καρπὸν πολὺν φέρετε*. While there is a textual variant of *γίνομαι*, as a future indicative (*γενήσεσθε*) or aorist subjunctive (*γένησθε*),⁶³⁶ the difference in meaning of the complete clause (*ἵνα καρπὸν πολὺν φέρετε καὶ γένησθε ἐμοὶ μαθηταί*) is nearly imperceptible⁶³⁷ since with both options *γίνομαι* is in the apodosis of fruit-bearing for the Father's glory. Carson stresses the closeness between fruit-bearing and discipleship when he writes: "The one stands by metonymy for the other."⁶³⁸ Barrett also stresses the conceptual ties between discipleship and fruit when he writes: "John seems to think of continuous fruit-bearing as the outward and visible sign of being a disciple."⁶³⁹ Brown prefers the future indicative *γενήσεσθε* and sees "become my disciples" as coordinate with "that you bear much fruit," so that, in his view, the two are not reflecting two different actions, but are working in tandem, "in bearing fruit they show that they are disciples."⁶⁴⁰ For Brown, "becoming my disciples" involves love for Jesus (9–10) and love for others (12–17).⁶⁴¹ The promise of demonstrating the genuineness of discipleship echoes the message of 8:31 (see §2.2.1.3a), which affirms a true disciple

⁶³⁵ Segovia, *Love*, 107.

⁶³⁶ The verb *γίνομαι* as a future indicative (*γενήσεσθε*) appears in *ℵ* and A. However, Metzger notes: "the committee found it exceedingly difficult" to decide between the future indicative and the aorist subjunctive. The aorist (*γένησθε*) was chosen "chiefly on the basis of age and diversity of the external support." Metzger, *Commentary*, 209.

⁶³⁷ Barrett, *John*, 475.

⁶³⁸ Carson, *John*, 519.

⁶³⁹ Barrett, *John*, 475.

⁶⁴⁰ Brown, *John*, 662–63.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 680.

as someone who remains in Jesus' teaching.⁶⁴² Likewise, with regard to the foot-washing scene, Tolmie points out that the contrast between clean/not clean indicates true/false discipleship (13:8–11).⁶⁴³ Furthermore, we observe that the exhortation for the disciples to love each other (13:34–35; 15:12, 17) can be linked with genuine discipleship. For the command to love each other in 13:34–35 appears in the narrative concerning Judas' betrayal of Jesus and Peter's desire to be in union with Jesus (13:8–38);⁶⁴⁴ thus Judas and Peter portray false and true discipleship, respectively. The next appearance of the command to love each other (15:12, 17) is also linked with true discipleship since the command is in the context of abiding in Jesus and fruit-bearing which demonstrates true discipleship (15:7–8). Since fruit confirms the Son's love for the Father and the Son's abiding in the Father's love, fruit becomes the confirmation of the disciple's genuine abiding in Jesus.

3.3.4 Abiding and Discipleship

In this section I show the link between my overall argument that John encourages his readers to continuous discipleship in the light of potential opposition to commitment to Jesus *and* abiding as a compensatory benefit and as a condition (with corollary benefits) of belief in Jesus.

First, the promise of abiding with Jesus in the future appears alongside comments regarding Jesus' imminent departure (14:1–3) and remarks regarding defection from following Jesus (16:1–2). In 14:1, the pathos of the passage is the disciples' anxiety concerning Jesus' departure to the Father as observable in John's depiction of Jesus' words of comfort, "Let not your hearts be troubled." John presents Jesus as exhorting the disciples to ongoing faith through the dual usage of πιστεύετε in the present tense, suggesting continuous commitment to Jesus (see also

⁶⁴² Farely writes, "The test of true discipleship is continuing allegiance to his teaching." Farely, *Disciples*, 52.

⁶⁴³ Tolmie, *Farewell*, 196.

⁶⁴⁴ Farely similarly understands the foot-washing scene as stressing the importance of continual union with Jesus for discipleship. Farely, *Disciples*, 65–66.

14:11–13).⁶⁴⁵ At the same time, Jesus’ encouragement to his disciples is to be seen in light of Jesus’ warning against the potential defection of his closest followers (16:1–2). John elsewhere notes the defection of many other disciples (6:66)⁶⁴⁶ and Judas’ defection (6:70; 13:2, 17–19, 21–31; 18:2–6).⁶⁴⁷ The placement of the narrative concerning Judas’ betrayal (13:2, 21–30) in the near context of the repeated exhortation for the disciples to believe and abide in Jesus (14:1, 11–12, 15–24; 15:1–11; 16:30–31) accents the importance of believing and abiding to avoid defection. Jesus admonishes that even in the face of potential hostility (14:27; 15:18–27; 16:1–2, 33), the disciples ought to remain loyal to him, inasmuch as in the end Jesus will ultimately see victory over any opposition, and by abiding in Jesus the disciples will experience corollary benefits.

Second, John’s repeated use of the present tense to promote belief in Jesus through the imperative πιστεύετε (14:1, 11),⁶⁴⁸ the present indicative πιστεύεις (14:10), the present participle ὁ πιστεύων (14:12), and the disciples’ confession in the present tense πιστεύομεν of their belief that Jesus is God’s agent (16:30) all stress the continuous nature of belief that is expected of the disciples who would experience the benefits of abiding in Jesus. John encourages belief even beyond the present by depicting Jesus as teaching his disciples all that is contained in the FD in order to make certain they continue to believe after he is gone (14:29).

Third, the conditional statements throughout the FD (e.g., 15:4, 6, 7, 10) also stress the exhortation to continuous discipleship. These statements feature the

⁶⁴⁵ Segovia observes that in 14:1–2, the call to courage and the call to believe are interrelated. The disciples will find comfort if they continue to believe. Segovia, *Farewell*, 81–83. The same is reinforced by Farely, *Disciples*, 69.

⁶⁴⁶ Resseguie reads this passage from the narrator’s point of view, suggesting that the spatial distance between Jesus and his followers, “many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him,” reflects an inner spiritual distancing from Jesus, that reveals apostasy. Resseguie, *Strange*, 95–96.

⁶⁴⁷ Tolmie writes that Judas’ decision to betray Jesus is indicative of false discipleship. Moreover, Tolmie sees the “night” reference in 13:30 with symbolic overtones, indicating that Judas “has become part of the forces of darkness.” Tolmie, *Farewell*, 193, citing 200. Similarly, Resseguie, *Strange*, 61.

⁶⁴⁸ In 14:1, the form of both verbs can be imperative (Barrett, *John*, 456; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 243 note e; Carson, *John*, 488; Klink, *John*, 613–14; Thompson, *John*, 306) or indicative (Brown, *John*, 618). Contextually it is appropriate to view both uses of πιστεύετε imperatively since the imperative μὴ παρασέσθω precedes πιστεύετε. Nevertheless, the meaning of the verse is not drastically altered with either view, but rather, in both cases a call to continuous discipleship is implied.

conditions of remaining in Jesus (15:4, 6, 7) and in his word (15:10) in the protasis, and the promises of bearing fruit (15:4), protection from judgment (15:6), answered requests (15:7), and love from Jesus (15:10) in the apodosis. These promises further serve to encourage the disciple to abide in Jesus/Jesus' teaching and thereby exhibit true discipleship (e.g., 8:31).

The fourth indicator of John's exhortation toward continuous discipleship is John's depiction of the disciples' response to Jesus' promise of abiding. In the FD, John denotes the disciples' responses to Jesus only infrequently, and in those instances their response is in the form of a question (13:6–9, 24–25, 36–38; 14:5, 8, 22; 16:17–18), with the exception of 16:29–30. In 16:29–30, John features the disciples' unified response to Jesus—"We believe that you came from God," a confession that characterizes Jesus' committed disciples throughout the Gospel (e.g., 6:69; 11:27; 17:8, 25; 20:28). Thus, although John does not immediately narrate the disciples' response after each benefit is presented, John's portrayal of their final words in the FD (16:29–30) indicates a positive response to Jesus' teaching presented in the FD.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter, I argued that Johannine abiding is a benefit that has a present and a future dimension. In agreement with Kanagaraj, it has been my contention that abiding in GJohn refers to "the 'lasting immanence' between God and Christ or believers and Christ, emphasizing the sense of permanence."⁶⁴⁹ The concept of God's abiding presence with his people in the present dimension and in the eschaton was demonstrated from the Jewish writings that affirm the "realized-unrealized" understanding of *μονή* that we encounter in GJohn. The promise of God's abiding presence reaches its zenith in eschatology when Jesus will provide a dwelling place (*μονή*) for his faithful disciples (14:2–3). Thus, John's presentation of abiding takes on a progressive sense, a journey⁶⁵⁰ of the disciple toward the Father's house. Meanwhile, in the present dimension of abiding with the Father and the Son through

⁶⁴⁹ Kanagaraj, *Mysticism*, 264.

the Spirit, the disciple is exhorted to abide in Jesus by loving him through obedience to his commands and bearing fruit. The faithful disciple will abide in Jesus and thereby enjoy additional benefits, namely, the presence of the Paraclete, love, peace, joy, avoidance of judgment, answered requests, the ability to perform great works, fruit, and confirmation of being a disciple of Jesus. John offers the promise of abiding with its associated benefits to his readers to encourage them to maintain their belief in Jesus as Messiah.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., 266.

CHAPTER 4: BENEFIT 3—ROYAL FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS

Οὐκέτι λέγω ὑμᾶς δούλους... ὑμᾶς δὲ εἵρηκα φίλους.

4.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I discussed membership in the divine family and the present and future abiding of the Father and the Son through the Spirit with the believer as benefits of continuous discipleship. In this chapter, I introduce friendship as the third primary compensatory benefit of continuous discipleship. I propose that John infuses the term φίλοι in 15:12–17 with the royal-political meaning that can be designated royal friendship. Royal friendship with Jesus is treated as a major benefit because of the peculiarity of this theme to the Gospel and its placement in the FD. First, the infrequent designation in the NT of Jesus’ disciples as his friends in contrast to GJohn devoting an entire paragraph to this motif warrants a closer study of this image in GJohn.⁶⁵¹ Moreover, 15:12–17 is the only passage in GJohn in which John portrays Jesus as calling his disciples “friends,” thus making this passage peculiar within the Gospel. Second, the strategic placement of 15:12–17 within the FD is observable in the transitional clauses in verse 11 (ταῦτα λελάληκα) and in verse 17 (ταῦτα ἐντέλλομαι), and in the inclusio “to love one another” in verses 12 and 17 (see §4.6.2).

In addition to the uniqueness of GJohn to feature friendship through strategic placement and devotion of space to the theme of friendship, there are three reasons why royal friendship is a viable interpretation of 15:12–17. First, classical Greek, Roman, and Hellenistic writings provide a literary context in which φίλος bears political overtones and thus substantiate royal friendship as a viable option (§4.4). Second, the Gospel’s portrayal of Jesus as a monarch further supports the notion of royal friendship (§4.5). Third, the exegesis and context of 15:12–17 supports the royal friendship interpretation (§4.6). Based on these arguments, I propose that in 15:12–17 John portrays Jesus as a royal figure who invites his followers into a royal

⁶⁵¹ Luke 12:4 is the only other reference to Jesus calling his disciples friends in the NT.

friendship in which they experience the honor and privileges of being members of his inner circle.

In this chapter, I first address the Johannine use of *φιλία* language in contrast to its usage in the rest of the NT (§4.2; §4.3). Next, I examine the term *φίλος* in the ancient writings to demonstrate the viability of the royal-political meaning as the background to this term (§4.4).⁶⁵² I then examine five Johannine passages—1:49; 3:3–5; 6:14–15; 12:13–15; 18:33–19:21—in order to demonstrate that John presents Jesus as a royal figure (§4.5). Subsequently, through the exegetical study of 15:12–17, I demonstrate that in this passage John features Jesus as establishing royal friendship with his disciples (§4.6). I conclude this chapter by identifying responsibilities and benefits surrounding royal friendship with Jesus. I propose that John features *φιλία* as royal friendship along with its corollary benefits—love, knowledge of the Father, fruit, joy, and answered requests—in order to encourage his readers to continuous discipleship even in the face of opposition (§4.7).

4.2 Friendship Terminology in the New Testament

The noun *φιλία* is mentioned once in the NT (Jam 4:4), while *φίλος* appears 29 times in the NT with a wide range of meanings. *Φίλος* refers to public associations between people (14:10), private friendship (Luke 14:12; 15:29; Acts 10:24; 19:31; 27:3), neighbors (Luke 11:5, 6, 8; 15:6, 9), military personnel (Luke 7:6), Jesus as a “friend of tax collectors and sinners” (Matt 11:19; Luke 7:34), unfaithful friends (Luke 21:16), Christian relationships (3 John 15), and to friends that last beyond this life (Luke 16:9). Additionally, *φίλος* refers to the friendship between Herod and Pilate (Luke 23:12), friendship with God (Jam 2:23), and friendship with the world (Jam 4:4). In addition to the nouns *φιλία*/*φίλος*, the verb *φιλέω* is used 25 times by NT writers with a similar broad range of meanings. *Φιλέω* refers to the desire for public honor and respect (Matt 6:5; 23:6; Luke 20:46), familial relationships (Matt 10:37),

⁶⁵² Bultmann famously suggested Mandaean Gnostic literature as a relevant text to John 15:12–17 because of certain similarities between GJohn and the Mandaean texts (see *Ginza* 22.9; 61.9; 388:26–29; *JB Mand* 92:3). However, since these texts are much later than GJohn, they are not pertinent for the background to GJohn. Bultmann, *John*, 7–9, 529–47; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:112.

Judas' kiss of betrayal (Matt 26:48=Mark 14:44=Luke 22:47), love for Jesus (1 Cor 16:22),⁶⁵³ believers' love for each other (Titus 3:15), Jesus' love for the church (Rev 3:19), and the habitual practice of lying (Rev 22:15).

Luke 12:4 is the only NT verse where Jesus calls his disciples friends outside of John 15:12–17. In Luke 12:4–12, Jesus is presented as teaching his disciples not to fear physical death because God cares for them. The passage states that God knows their hair-count (v. 7) and has greater concern for them than for sparrows (vv. 6–7). Because the greater context of these two passages makes reference to opposition to Jesus' followers (John 15:18–25; Luke 12:4, 11) and the assistance of the Spirit (John 15:26–27; Luke 12:12), it is possible to understand the term φίλοι as bearing a similar meaning in these two passages.⁶⁵⁴ However, there are also differences which may suggest that the passages use the term differently. John develops friendship in an entire paragraph which includes themes of hierarchy, obedience, slavery, and appointment to a fruitful mission, all of which are absent from Luke 12:4–12. Thus, I propose a more nuanced interpretation of φίλοι μου in John 15:12–17. I suggest that by addressing his disciples as φίλοι μου Jesus thereby integrates his disciples into a royal friendship with him.

4.3 Friendship Terminology in GJohn

John employs the term φίλος six times in four passages and in each occurrence we can identify a unique nuance in the meaning (3:29; 11:11; 15:12–17 (3x); 19:12). The first occurrence of φίλος refers to John the Baptist as a friend of the bridegroom (3:29).⁶⁵⁵ This friendship is characterized by disparity between John the Baptist and Jesus. For example, John the Baptist is portrayed as confessing, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (3:30); Jesus attracts more disciples than John the Baptist (3:26;

⁶⁵³ See appendix B for a study of ὁμολογέω and ἀνάθεμα in the NT in relation to love for Jesus.

⁶⁵⁴ Garland suggests that in Luke 12:4, Jesus' disciples are viewed similar to “loyalists in the emperor's favored circle.” Marshall, however, sees this designation as merely describing “the close relationship between Jesus and those who do his will and are entrusted with his secrets.” David E. Garland, *Luke*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 504; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 513.

4:1–3); John the Baptist affirms that he is not the Messiah (3:28; see also 1:20–28, 29–34, 35–36); and John associates John the Baptist with this world and Jesus with the world above (3:31).⁶⁵⁶ In addition to inequality, this first use of φίλος also entails trust since the friend of the groom provides oversight of the wedding.⁶⁵⁷ The next mention of φίλος refers to Lazarus whom Jesus calls “our friend” (11:11). In 11:3, Mary and Martha refer to Lazarus as someone who was loved by Jesus (11:36). Jesus’ love for Lazarus is characterized by self-sacrifice since Jesus is willing to put himself in the way of danger (11:8) for the benefit of his friend. The third appearance of φίλος is in 15:12–17, which is treated below. The fourth mention of φίλος is in 19:12, which carries political overtones, and which will be examined below in more detail as it sheds light on the use of φίλος in 15:12–17.

The verb φιλέω appears 13 times in GJohn and consistently carries the meaning of affection (5:20; 11:3, 36; 12:25; 15:19; 16:27 (2x); 20:2; 21:15, 16, 17 (3x)). Φιλέω refers to the Father’s affection for the Son (5:20); the Father’s affection for Jesus’ followers and their love for Jesus (16:27 (2x)); Jesus’ love for Lazarus (11:3, 36); the love of Jesus’ followers for him to such a degree that it appears as self-hatred (12:25); the world’s love for those who belong to it (15:19); the BD (20:2, note the interchangeable use of ἀγαπάω with φιλέω—13:23; 20:26; 21:7, 20–24); and the affection between Jesus and Peter (21:15, 16, 17 (3x)).

Kaczmarek has examined the Johannine usage of the terms and concepts related to love, friendship, and discipleship (e.g., ἀγαπάω, φιλέω, φίλος) and has argued that these have gone through a relexicalization process in the Johannine community, and that love and friendship have become linked to authentic

⁶⁵⁵ Within the Jewish custom, this is a reference to the *shoshben*, who was the groom’s closest friend and who was tasked with the duty to prepare the wedding. Barrett, *John*, 223; Brown, *John*, 152; Keener, *John*, 578–80.

⁶⁵⁶ Beck admits that John the Baptist is presented as a positive character but rejects him to be a model for the readers of GJohn because of his unrepeatable testimony to the Logos. However, in 5:33 John is a witness to the truth which all disciples are expected to believe (8:32; 16:13; 18:37). Moreover, John is presented as an effective witness to Jesus (1:6–9, 20–36; 3:27–30; 10:41). Thus when John the Baptist is placed alongside other Johannine witnesses (e.g., Moses, the Father, the Law, the Spirit, the disciples), it is reasonable to view John the Baptist as an imitable witness to Jesus. Beck, *Discipleship*, 40–43, 138.

⁶⁵⁷ Keener, *John*, 579–80.

discipleship.⁶⁵⁸ Kaczmarek equates discipleship with friendship and love based on the interchangeable meaning of φιλέω and ἀγαπάω.⁶⁵⁹ Kaczmarek presents three characteristics of the love-friendship-discipleship language—(1) unifying power, abiding, unity/equality, (2) comfort, change of relationship, inclusivity, and (3) service and obligation.⁶⁶⁰ Kaczmarek concludes that in GJohn, friendship has been changed from functioning as a pillar in a society, to becoming a notion that is “forever linked with authentic discipleship.”⁶⁶¹ Thus, Kaczmarek writes, “The Evangelist, through the character of Jesus, equates discipleship with friendship.”⁶⁶²

Kaczmarek rightly observes a close relationship between the language of love, friendship, and discipleship in GJohn; however, I contend that to proceed to equate these concepts seems simplistic. First, we can observe that the verbs φιλέω and ἀγαπάω do not always refer to discipleship (e.g., 3:19; 15:19); therefore, while these two terms certainly apply to discipleship, they in fact appear to bear a broader sense than discipleship. Second, while Kaczmarek examines only φίλος, φιλέω, and ἀγαπάω in relation to discipleship, John in fact portrays discipleship through a series of additional concepts, namely following, believing, remaining in Jesus’ teaching, and bearing fruit. Thus, the breadth of John’s presentation of the expressions of discipleship does not support Kaczmarek’s suggestion that discipleship is friendship. Third, Kaczmarek’s first characteristic of friendship-discipleship, namely equality,

⁶⁵⁸ Kaczmarek, *Language*, 21–23, 40–55.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 21, 33–39, 68–69. I agree with Kaczmarek’s observation that the meaning of φιλέω and ἀγαπάω is interchangeable (see 5:20 with 3:35; 11:3 with v. 5; 13:23 with 20:2; 14:21 with 16:27). Similarly, Bennema, *Power*, 224 fn. 51; Brown, *John*, 497–99; Bultmann, *John*, 711 fn. 5; Kaczmarek, *Language*, 21, 24–39; Ringe, *Wisdom’s Friends*, 65; Segovia, *Love*, 134; Willett, *Wisdom*, 75–76. I am not convinced by Brock’s argument that φιλέω and ἀγαπάω are representative of different Christian communities that preferred these terms, i.e., Petrine community preferred φιλέω while Johannine preferred ἀγαπάω. Brock argues that the Johannine community employed a Petrine term (i.e., φιλέω) to demonstrate unity with Peter’s followers. Kaczmarek relies on Brock and espouses a similar position, that is, the redactor added John 21 to establish the equality of the John’s and Peter’s witness. However, in 21:15–18, the focus is Peter’s relationship to Jesus not to John. Moreover, Jesus’ inquiry focuses on Peter’s restoration and assignment to shepherd the flock rather than the superiority or inferiority of his testimony to Jesus in comparison to the BD’s. Ann Graham Brock, “The Significance of Φιλέω and Φίλος in the Tradition of Jesus Sayings and in the Early Christian Communities,” *HTR* 90 no. 4 (October 1997): 393–409; Kaczmarek, *Language*, 62–73.

⁶⁶⁰ Kaczmarek, *Language*, 49–50.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, 47.

does not align with the hierarchical description of friendship in 15:14 and 16 (further discussed in §4.6.2). Fourth, friendship is not the only image associated with discipleship; the imagery of family is also juxtaposed with discipleship (8:30–44). Thus, instead of limiting the latitude of John’s presentation of discipleship to friendship, I suggest to view discipleship as an overall category of commitment to Jesus with diverse expressions of that commitment (e.g., 8:31; 12:24–26, 42; 13:34–35; 14:15; 15:14, 16, 27) and with different benefits that are derived from the discipleship relationship, one of which is friendship (15:12–17).

Thus, although Kaczmarek rightly observes the close relationship between love, friendship, and discipleship, and although his insight into the Johannine relexicalization process within the Johannine community rightly denotes a nuanced usage of these words within GJohn, Kaczmarek’s inference (from his main argument of relexicalization) that discipleship is friendship is, arguably, myopic.⁶⁶³ Instead, as I argue below, it is preferable to view friendship as a “change of relationship”⁶⁶⁴ between Jesus and his disciples, a change that elevates them to the status of being friends of a king; therefore, friendship is a benefit that derives from discipleship rather than one that is equal to discipleship.

4.4 Friendship in the Ancient Mediterranean Context

4.4.1 Friendship with God

In this section I argue that the concept of friendship with God is not a defensible paradigm for understanding John 15:12–17. First, friendship with God is not a prominent paradigm in the OT and in Jewish literature.⁶⁶⁵ Only Abraham is called the “friend of God” (2 Chr 20:7; Isa 41:8; *Jub.* 19:9; *Apoc. Ab.* 10:6; *T. Ab.* 15:12–14; see also Jam 2:23) and of Moses it says that God spoke to him face to face as to a

⁶⁶³ Ibid., 47, 55.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., 50.

⁶⁶⁵ For treatment of friendship in the OT and other Jewish literature, see Ringe, *Wisdom’s Friends*, 71–74.

friend (Exod 33:11; Num 12:8; Deut 34:10; Wis 7:27).⁶⁶⁶ Philo refers to Abraham and Moses as friends of God.⁶⁶⁷ In addition to Abraham and Moses, Levi (*Jub.* 30:18–20) and the righteous are also designated as God’s friends (*Wis.* 7:14, 27; 8:18). For example, in *Wis.* 7:27–28, the person who seeks W/wisdom and acts wisely is called a “friend of God” and is loved by God.⁶⁶⁸ Bernard relies on Philo to suggest that in John 15:12–17, we have an example of friendship with God. For Bernard, the overlapping theme of slavery between Philo⁶⁶⁹ and John 15:12–17, the mention of benefits by both authors, and John’s depiction of Jesus as the Son of God led Bernard to favor friendship with God as the lens for 15:12–17.⁶⁷⁰ While examples of friendship with God do exist in ancient Jewish literature, these examples are too few to serve as a lens through which we should interpret John 15.

Second, friendship with God is not even the precise concept that John presents in the Gospel; for the text of GJohn focuses on friendship between *Jesus* and the disciples not between *God* and the disciples. In GJohn, Jesus is continually presented as God’s agent (e.g., 3:2, 16–17; 5:36–37; 10:36; 17:8–9) and in 15:16, Jesus continues to function as a mediator between the two parties, particularly in prayer (see also 17:8–9, 20). Jesus’ role in praying on behalf of his disciples (15:16) is comparable to Moses, as God’s friend, who had direct access to petition God on behalf of Israel (Exod 33:11, 18; 33:19–34:8).⁶⁷¹ That is, both Moses and Jesus function as mediators between God and humans through prayer, and thus it would be

⁶⁶⁶ Chennattu compares the friendship between Jesus and his disciples to the OT covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel. However, Israel is not designated as Yahweh’s friend in the OT. Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 117.

⁶⁶⁷ Abraham: *Sacr.* 77; *Abr.* 50, 89, 273; *Sobr.* 55–56. Moses: *Mos.* 1.156; *Sacr.* 130; *Ebr.* 94; *Migr.* 45; *Her.* 21; *Somn.* I.193–194, 231–232.

⁶⁶⁸ Brown focuses on the phrase “loved by God,” and appends it to Isa 41:8, which states that Abraham is “loved by God,” and Brown concludes that in John 15 we should see the disciples as beloved of Jesus rather than as his “friends.” Brown, *John*, 664.

⁶⁶⁹ Philo writes: “For wisdom is rather God’s friend than His servant [φίλον γὰρ τὸ σοφὸν θεῷ μᾶλλον ἢ δοῦλον]. And therefore He says plainly of Abraham, ‘shall I hide anything from Abraham My friend?’ (Gen. xviii. 17). But he who has this portion has passed beyond the bounds of human happiness. He alone is nobly born, or he has registered God as his father and become by adoption His only son, the possessor not of riches, but of all riches, faring sumptuously where there is nought but good things.” *Ebr.* 55–56 (Colson and Whitaker, LCL).

⁶⁷⁰ Bernard et al., *John*, 487–88.

⁶⁷¹ Keener sees a parallel between Moses in Exod 33:11 and the disciples since God revealed his glory to Moses and to the disciples through Jesus, the “embodiment of torah in flesh (2 Cor 3).” Keener, *John*, 410, 1013.

more appropriate to draw a parallel between Moses and Jesus as God's friends. John's declaration, however, is not that Jesus is God's friend, but that the disciples are Jesus' friends. Thus, there is no contextual indication that John is viewing friendship in 15:12–17 through the Jewish notion of friendship with God.⁶⁷²

In addition to the Jewish sources, there are mentions of friendship with a god in Greek and Roman writings.⁶⁷³ In these texts, writers invoke friendship with a god to guarantee military victory (Aeschylus, *Sept.* 174), to obtain favor from a god (Iamblichus, *Vit. Pyth.* 10.5), or to share in the character of the divine (Iamblichus, *Vit. Pyth.* 33.240). For example, Epictetus addresses this subject frequently in reference to a person who is free because he is a "friend of a god" (*Disc.* 2.17.29–30; 3.24.60; 4.3.9), and to indicate that there can be no friend dearer than a god (*Disc.* 2.16.44–45). However, these Greek and Roman sources lack parallel themes with John 15 that would establish friendship with a god as a plausible background. In short, the Jewish concept of friendship with God and the parallel Greco-Roman motif is unlikely to be the background for John 15:15.⁶⁷⁴

4.4.2 Greek Fictive-Kinship Friendship

In this section, I examine Greek fictive-kinship friendship as the background to the Johannine use of φίλος,⁶⁷⁵ and I argue that John, on the one hand, incorporates this classical Greek notion of friendship and that he, on the other hand, surpasses it in his depiction of friendship in 15:12–17. Aristotle discusses φιλία in more detail than does any other classical writer,⁶⁷⁶ and Aristotle understands φιλία as a partnership in which friends share life's joys and sorrows (*Eth. nic.* 8.9.2; 9.4.1), for a true friend is

⁶⁷² Pace, Ringe, *Wisdom's Friends*, 67; Van der Watt, *Family*, 365.

⁶⁷³ For additional ancient sources on friendship with deity, see Keener, *John*, 1011–12, fns. 244–63.

⁶⁷⁴ For further discussion of friendship with God, see §4.6.

⁶⁷⁵ The following works examine classical φιλία. Culy, *Echoes*; John T. Fitzgerald, *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World*, NovTSup 82 (Leiden: Brill, 1996); John T. Fitzgerald, *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, RBS 34 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, KTAH (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Johns Varghese, *The Imagery of Love in the Gospel of John* (Rome, Italy: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2009), 207–77.

⁶⁷⁶ He discusses it in *Nicomachean Ethics* books eight and nine; *Eudemian Ethics* book seven; and in his works *Politics*, *Rhetoric*, and *Magna Moralia*. For critical comments on these works, refer to Fitzgerald, *Perspectives on Friendship*, 35, fn.1.

an extension of self (*Eth. nic.* 9.9.1). Moltmann comments on the Aristotelian notion of commitment in friendship as follows:

Friendship is no passing feeling of affection. It combines affection with faithfulness. You can rely upon a friend. A friend remains a friend even in misfortune...[faithfulness] has to do not with acting and possessing but with the individual person and with being.⁶⁷⁷

Moreover, for Aristotle, friends (φίλοι) should be willing to sacrifice for each other. Aristotle writes, “But it is also true that the virtuous man’s conduct is often guided by the interests of his friends and of his country, and that he will if necessary lay down his life in their behalf.”⁶⁷⁸ Seneca similarly affirmed that friendship entailed mutual concern between friends. He writes:

I am not your friend unless whatever is at issue concerning you is my concern also...There is no such thing as good or bad fortune for the individual; we live in common. And no one can live happily who...transforms everything into a question of his own utility; you must live for your neighbor, if you would live for yourself.⁶⁷⁹

With Aristotle and Seneca, we observe that concern for a friend even to the point of death was quite prevalent in the thinking of ancient writers.⁶⁸⁰ Johannine friendship reflects a similar notion of faithfulness, sacrifice, and commitment. John writes, “No one has greater love than this, that someone should lay down his life for his friends” (15:13). Jesus illustrates the sacrificial aspects of ancient friendship to his disciples before he expects the same of them (see below).

In addition to sacrificial partnership, the notion of the friend as an extension of self is present in John in the themes of sharing of all things and the disciples’ participation in Jesus’ mission. In 15:15, John depicts Jesus as telling his disciples, “I have called you friends, because the things which I heard from my Father, I made known to you.” This aligns with the Aristotelian notion of holding all things in common. Subsequently, in verse 16 Jesus declares, “I appointed you to go and bear

⁶⁷⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, “Open Friendship: Aristotelian and Christian Concepts of Friendship,” in *The Changing Face of Friendship*, ed. Leroy S. Rouser (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1994), 30–31.

⁶⁷⁸ Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.8.9 (Rackham, LCL).

⁶⁷⁹ Seneca, *Ep.* 48.2 (Gummere, LCL).

⁶⁸⁰ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.120; Epictetus, *Disc.* 2.7.3; Lucian, *Tox.* 37; Plato, *Apol.* 28d; *Symp.* 179b; Seneca, *Ep.* 9.10–11.

fruit and your fruit should last, so that if you ask anything from the Father in my name, he will give it to you,” a statement that reflects the intimacy between Jesus and the disciples and aligns with the Aristotelian rubric of a friend being an extension of self.

Coupled with the principles of sharing joys and sorrows in friendship is the duty of demonstrating frankness of speech toward a friend. Konstan explains that honesty in conversation was prized as a means of distinguishing a true friend from a false one.⁶⁸¹ He makes two helpful observations.⁶⁸² First, Hellenistic philosophical schools incorporated teaching on *παρρησία* in the context of instruction on friendship. Second, during tense political times, *παρρησία* was seen as possible only among friends. Konstan cites Cicero’s letter to his friend Atticus in which Cicero writes:

I must tell you that what I most badly need at the present time is a confidant—someone with whom I could share all that gives me any anxiety, a wise, affectionate friend to whom I could talk without pretence or evasion or concealment.⁶⁸³

Similarly, Plutarch called frankness of speech the “language of friendship” (*Flatterer* 5), while Seneca wrote, “Speak as boldly with him as with yourself...why need I keep back any words in the presence of my friend? Why should I not regard myself as alone when in his company?”⁶⁸⁴ Philo also understood *παρρησία* as an essential element in *φιλία*, making the two concepts nearly inseparable when he wrote, “And frankness (*παρρησία*) of speech is akin to friendship. For to whom should a man speak with frankness (*παρρησιάζαιτο*) but to his friend?”⁶⁸⁵

In John, *παρρησία* is mentioned nine times but with relevance to our discussion only in two verses (16:25, 29). The remaining passages refer to Jesus’ boldness in ministry (7:26; 10:24; 11:14; 18:20) or his lack of boldness (7:4; 11:54), and the crowd’s lack of boldness in confessing Jesus as the Christ for the fear of “the Jews” (7:13). The two verses which depict Jesus’ *παρρησία* in his relationship with

⁶⁸¹ Konstan, *Friendship*, 15. Konstan discusses *παρρησία* in more depth on pages 103–5.

⁶⁸² Ibid.

⁶⁸³ Ibid. Cicero, *Att.* 1.18 (Bailey, LCL).

⁶⁸⁴ Seneca, *Ep.* 3.3 (Gummere, LCL).

⁶⁸⁵ Philo, *Her.* 21 (Colson and Whitaker, LCL).

his disciples appear in John 16. In 16:25, Jesus promises to speak frankly with his disciples rather than in metaphors, while in 16:29 *παρρησία* is attributed to the disciples as a group affirming Jesus' openness in speech. John depicts Jesus' *παρρησία* as grounded in the love relationship between the disciples and the Father (16:23, 27)⁶⁸⁶ because of their belief that Jesus came from the Father; and this love will move the Father to fulfill of the disciples' requests that they ask in the name of Jesus (16:23).

John also associates frank speech with friendship in 15:12–17 even though the term *παρρησία* is not used. In 15:15, John credits Jesus' full revelation of the Father to the disciples as evidence of their transition from slavery to friendship. Segovia sees the distinguishing mark of friendship to be the "fullness of revelation."⁶⁸⁷ That is, they have "received and accepted the whole of Jesus' teaching and revelation as entrusted to him by the Father."⁶⁸⁸ Culy notes that openness in conversation stresses "absolute relational transparency."⁶⁸⁹ Rainbow with reliance on O'Day points to the ancient Mediterranean custom of the master keeping his slaves uninformed, whereas the friends of the master were his equals and thus had the right to engage in free conversation.⁶⁹⁰ But then Rainbow unpersuasively links Jesus' declaration in 15:15, "Because all things that I heard from my Father, I made known to you," to the promise made to Israel and Judah in Jer 31:34, "They shall all know me." There is no direct allusion in John 15:12–17 to Jer 31:31–34. Moreover, in John 15:15, Jesus is God's agent who conveys information, whereas in Jer 31:34 the people cease to teach each other about God because the law was written on their hearts (31:33).⁶⁹¹

⁶⁸⁶ Van der Watt points to *παρρησία* (16:27) as the expression of God's love for the disciples as evidence for friendship in a household setting since love was fundamental to ancient friendship. See below for my treatment of friendship in the context of the family. Van der Watt, *Family*, 366.

⁶⁸⁷ Segovia, *Farewell*, 158–59.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ Culy, *Echoes*, 154.

⁶⁹⁰ See Gail R. O'Day, "Jesus as Friend in the Gospel of John," *Int* (April 2004): 157; Rainbow, *Theology*, 285–86. Both O'day and Rainbow only see fictive-kinship friendship in 15:12–17 with no hint of royal overtones. See O'Day, "Jesus as Friend," 144–57.

⁶⁹¹ There are no lexical connections by which the two passages might be associated; there are merely general conceptual similarities of the people knowing God under the new covenant and not needing to

It is reasonable to link Jesus' full revelation to the disciples to the Hellenistic practice of frankness of speech between friends. In John, this practice was a privilege that was enjoyed only by Jesus' disciples to the exclusion of others from this special revelation (17:6–9, 26). In the end, the entire FD may be considered to be an example of this free speech between friends, for as Schnelle states: "Among true friends, it is possible to speak the truth in all candor and thus cultivate friendship, so that the Farewell Discourses themselves function as a kind of friendship maintenance."⁶⁹²

But John does not simply follow the typical Greco-Roman function of *παρρησία* in friendship; John, rather, surpasses this understanding of friendship. On the one hand, John reverses the Aristotelian logic of entering into friendship in that Jesus reveals himself to the disciples *in order* to make them his friends rather than *because* they had become his friends. For as Fitzgerald explains:

In the standard Greco-Roman understanding of friendship, revelation presupposes friendship...one might have expected the Johannine Jesus to have said to his disciples, '...inasmuch as we are now friends, I shall disclose to you everything that I have heard from the Father.' But Jesus in the Fourth Gospel does not do that...Instead, he reverses the standard logic: 'I have called you friends because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father' (15:15). Revelation here creates friendship rather than presupposes it...By treating his followers as friends, Jesus makes them precisely that.⁶⁹³

Thus, Johannine friendship reverses the Aristotelian concept of friendship. On the other hand, John also indicates that the disciples became Jesus' friends because they received Jesus' words. John 17:8 states: "For I have given them the words which you gave me, and they have received them." Segovia observes that the disciples became friends because they accepted the "whole of Jesus' teaching and revelation as entrusted to him by the Father. In other words, the given status of the disciples in the chain of love, as those loved by Jesus, is due to their own reception and acceptance

be taught by God. Additionally, there are no friendship or slavery themes in Jeremiah. Thus, Rainbow's association of the two passages is unwarranted. Rainbow, *Theology*, 285–86.

⁶⁹² Udo Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009), 739.

⁶⁹³ John T. Fitzgerald, "Christian Friendship: John, Paul, and the Philippians," *Int* (July 2007): 285.

of Jesus' teaching and revelation."⁶⁹⁴ Thus, while Jesus' frankness of speech makes the disciples friends in GJohn, the disciples' reception of Jesus' frank speech about the Father demonstrates that they belong to Jesus and to the Father (17:6–8).

In this section, I examined the Greek notion of fictive-kinship friendship as a backdrop to Johannine friendship. There are certainly features of fictive-kinship friendship present in John 15:15. However, as noted above, Johannine friendship surpasses the fictive-kinship friendship that appears in Greek literature. In §4.6, I develop this discussion further, demonstrating through the exegesis of 15:12–17 that royal friendship is a more plausible background for 15:12–17 than fictive-kinship friendship.

4.4.3 Roman *Clientela* and *Amicitia* as Friendship

In this section, I examine Roman writings⁶⁹⁵ that confirm the practice of royal friendship in the ancient Near East, which arguably lends support to understanding John 15:12–17 as depicting royal friendship. Both *amicitia* and *clientela* refer to friendship between a superior and an inferior (Cicero, *Amic.* 71–73; Suetonius, *Aug.* 66.4).⁶⁹⁶ *Clientela* refers to a relationship between a superior and an inferior in which a superior offered protection in exchange for services or political support from the inferior.⁶⁹⁷ There was an element of expected reciprocity in these relationships such

⁶⁹⁴ Segovia, *Farewell*, 159.

⁶⁹⁵ For studies on Roman friendship, refer to David Braund, *Rome and The Friendly King: The Character of the Client Kingship* (London; New York: Croom Helm; St. Martin's Press, 1984); P. A. Brunt, *The Fall of the Roman Republic and Related Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); S. N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, *Patrons, Clients and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*, TSS (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Barbara K. Gold, *Literary Patronage in Greece and Rome* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1987); Horst Hutter, *Politics as Friendship: The Origins of Classical Notions of Politics in the Theory and Practice of Friendship* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1978); Konstan, *Friendship*; Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World: 31 BC–AD 337* (London: Duckworth, 1977), 110–22; Richard P. Saller, "Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (London; New York: Routledge, 1989), 49–87; E. Wolf, "Kinship, Friendship, and Patron-Client Relations," in *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies*, ed. Michael Banton (London: Tavistock Publications, 1966), 1–22.

⁶⁹⁶ Ernst Badian, "Amicitia," in *Brill's New Pauly*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider, Manfred Landfester, et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2005). For a bibliography of ancient writers addressing friendship, see Fitzgerald, *Perspectives on Friendship*, 7–11.

⁶⁹⁷ Konstan, *Friendship*, 136. Additionally, Judge observes that the status of friendship when conferred by the superior on the inferior "implied full conformity with the wishes of the initiator—as Jesus stated when he formulated the terms upon which the disciples would be counted as his friends

as exchange of goods (e.g., food, homes, cities, building projects, hospitality, gifts, and family alliances) for political loyalty, honor, and military support.⁶⁹⁸ According to Pearson, “The whole ancient theory of friendship is based on the assumption that favors will be returned: a man who helps his friend usually does so with the expectation that some return for his favor will be made.”⁶⁹⁹ This expectation was present in imperial friendships in which client kings were called *amicitiae* (Suetonius, *Aug.* 66.4).⁷⁰⁰ Roman emperors had *amicitiae* in their court, allowing them to influence the government.⁷⁰¹ Pliny further illustrates the benefits derived from friendship with the emperor, such as appointment to a priestly office (*Ep.* 10.13) or a praetorship (*Ep.* 10.12). Philo mentions that a “friend of Caesar” would be protected from public insult, both verbal and physical (*Flacc.* 6.40). Millar observes that for a man who was a “friend of Caesar,” this was a “publicly known and significant fact about him.”⁷⁰² The prominence of ancient friendship between a ruler and his select group of subjects is noted by Helen Bond who observes that the “coins of Herod Agrippa I [37–44 C.E.] frequently read ‘Philokaisar,’ a designation that Philo also gives him (*Flacc.* 6.40).”⁷⁰³ From this we can deduce that the title “friend of the

(‘if you do what I command you,’ John 15:14).” David M. Scholer, ed. *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century: Pivotal Essays by E. A. Judge* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 167.

⁶⁹⁸ Peter Garnsey and Richard P. Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 154; John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*, LEC 2 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 63–64. Josephus recounts an incident between Antipater and Jewish residents of Onias who initially resisted Antipater’s army, until Antipater showed them a letter from the high priest Hyrcanus who urged these residents to stand down and promised friendship with Julius Caesar in return for military support. *Antiq.* 14.131.

⁶⁹⁹ Lionel Ignacius Cusack Pearson, *Popular Ethics in Ancient Greece* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962), 136.

⁷⁰⁰ Suetonius writes that Augustus expected his friends to leave something for him in their wills. Suetonius, *Aug.* 66.4.

⁷⁰¹ There is an account of Domitian having righteous friends in his court while Trajan had evil friends in his court. *Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Severus Alexander* LXV. See also Badian, “Amicitia.” At the same time, the emperor could terminate his friendship at any moment as the relationship depended on the whims of the emperor. See Millar, *Emperor*, 111–12. An emperor’s displeasure with a friend could result in death (Plutarch, *Mor.* XI). *Ibid.*, 113.

⁷⁰² Millar, *Emperor*, 116.

⁷⁰³ Helen K. Bond, *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation*, SNTSMS 100 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 190; Brown, *John*, 879.

king”/“friend of Caesar” was used throughout the Roman provinces, which adds credence to the possibility of interpreting 15:12–17 as royal friendship.⁷⁰⁴

4.4.4 Hellenistic Friendship

The Maccabean literature provides additional examples of royal friendships in the ancient world. The relationships between the Ptolemaic, Seleucid, and Jewish rulers as depicted in the Maccabean literature provide a lens for understanding John 15:13–16 as royal friendship between Jesus and his disciples.⁷⁰⁵ The writers of 1–4 Maccabees employ φίλος (56 times)⁷⁰⁶ and φιλία (20 times)⁷⁰⁷ to describe political relationships with mutual benefits to the patron and the client.⁷⁰⁸ In contrast to the other Jewish writings in the LXX,⁷⁰⁹ 1–4 Maccabees has a high concentration of the terms φιλία and φίλος, therefore, I will limit my analysis of these terms to the occurrences in the Maccabean writings.

The usage of φίλος/φίλοι in the Maccabean literature⁷¹⁰ demonstrates that the superior ruler chose his friends and decided to whom he would grant public honors and gifts along with the title “friend of the king.” In exchange, the superior expected

⁷⁰⁴ Dominique Cuss, *Imperial Cult and Honorary Terms in the New Testament*, Paradosis, Contributions to the History of Early Christian Literature and Theology 23 (Fribourg: University Press, 1974), 169.

⁷⁰⁵ For a thorough treatment of friends in the Maccabean period, see E. J. Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides*, Haut-commissariat de la république française en Syrie et au Liban service des antiquités bibliothèque archéologique et historique XXVI (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1938), 40–50; Ceslas Spicq, *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire*, I, II, + Supplément vols., Orbis biblicus et orientalis 22/1–3 (Fribourg, Suisse; Göttingen: Éditions universitaires; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978–1982), 3:940–43; G. Herman, “The ‘Friends’ of the Early Hellenistic Rulers: Servants or Officials?,” *Talanta* 12–13 (1980–1981): 103–49.

⁷⁰⁶ 1 Mac—35 times; 2 Mac—6 times; 3 Mac—12 times; 4 Mac—4 times.

⁷⁰⁷ 1 Mac—15 times; 2 Mac—2 times; 4 Mac—3 times.

⁷⁰⁸ There is an exception in 4 Macc 2:10–13 where φιλία/φίλος refer to relationships between parents and children, a spousal relationship, and affection between friends.

⁷⁰⁹ The LXX employs φίλος 186 times and φιλία 36 times. The Hebrew equivalent for friend (also translated as “neighbor”) is רֵעַ, appearing 193 times in the BHS.

⁷¹⁰ There are additional passages in the LXX that designate individuals as friends of the king. A cursory review of these additional passages confirms the observations that I made of friends of the king in the Maccabean literature. That is, φίλος refers to men who functioned as the king’s counselors (2 Sam 15:32–37; 16:15–17:23; 1 Chr 27:33; 1 Esd 8:11, 13, 26; Esth 3:1; 6:9; Dan 5:23; 6:14; Bel 6:2), to friendship with international rulers (Esth 1:3, 13; 2:18), to public officials (Esth 8:12e LXX), and, to friends of king Hezekiah (Prov 25:1). In sum, the other LXX passages that refer to friends of the king do not negate the benefits and responsibilities that are associated with friends of the king as depicted in 1–4 Maccabees.

the loyalty of the inferior. In 1–4 Maccabees, φίλος/φίλοι refer to rulers of different nations who are friends (1 Macc 2:15–22), military personnel in the same unit (2:39; 3:38; 7:8–25; 9:26–28, 39), national alliances (8:17–32; 12:1–12), and inherited political friendships (14:18–22, 38–40; 15:15–22). During the Maccabean rebellion, the officers of Antiochus Epiphanes IV promised to Mattathias and his sons the title “friend of the king,” as well as silver, gold and other gifts in exchange for loyalty to Antiochus (2:15–22). Antiochus IV considered friendship a matter of loyalty either to God or to him, but not both, and in return Antiochus IV promised wealth, title, and political influence (2 Macc 7:24; 4 Macc 8:5; 12:4–5). A similar expression of “royal friendship” is also apparent in John 19:12. In this passage, Pilate is faced with a choice either to prefer friendship with Caesar and consign Jesus to the cross or to release Jesus and thereby jeopardize his friendship with Caesar.⁷¹¹

Another instance of royal friendship is apparent in the relationship between Alexander, the son of Antiochus IV, and Jonathan, the son of Mattathias. These two men shared a political friendship in which Alexander appointed Jonathan as the high priest, granted to him the title “friend of the king,” gave him a purple robe and a gold crown (1 Macc 10:18–20),⁷¹² appointed him as the general and governor of the province (1 Macc 10:65), and enrolled him into the first class of the order of friends (1 Macc 10:65).⁷¹³ In response, Alexander expected military partnership and loyalty from Jonathan (1 Macc 10:16, 20, 26). Furthermore, we read that friends of the king were appointed as viceroys (1 Macc 3:32), vice-regents (1 Macc 6:10–14; 2 Macc 11:1),⁷¹⁴ chief ministers (2 Macc 3:7), and regents (2 Macc 4:31); they also received the gifts of a crown, the king’s robe, and the king’s signet ring (1 Macc 6:14–17). When friendship alliances were made at the national level, the benefits included

⁷¹¹ This passage will be treated below.

⁷¹² Goldstein notes that, “friends of the king had the privileges of members of the royal court. They were entitled to wear purple broad-brimmed Macedonian hats and purple robes.” Jonathan A. Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, AB 41 (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 232.

⁷¹³ The same confirmation was made by King Ptolemy on Jonathan when Jonathan brought him silver, gold, clothing, and other gifts as narrated in 1 Macc 11:26–33, 57.

⁷¹⁴ John R. Bartlett, *The First and Second Books of the Maccabees* (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), 9–10.

national peace, extradition, and military aid (1 Macc 8:17–32; 12:1–12).⁷¹⁵ The friends of the king were elite politicians who exercised significant influence in the affairs of the state, functioned as guardians of the king’s son (1 Macc 6:14–17), and assisted the king in matters of war and persecution of religious sects (3 Macc 7:3–5).

The above illustrations from the Maccabean literature indicate that royal friendships existed at the individual and national level, and that royal friendships were characterized by reciprocal obligations and benefits. The benefits included influencing foreign and domestic policies, tangible wealth, upward social mobility, and even the opportunity to influence pedagogically the king’s children (1 Macc 6:14–17).

The notion of experiencing mutual benefits in a royal friendship appears also in GJohn. For example, John depicts Jesus as integrating his disciples into his circle of the royal friends (15:12–17), which is coupled with promises of dwelling in his Father’s residence (14:2–3), additional knowledge (15:15), and answered requests (15:16). Being part of this friendship, the disciples would, in turn, bear fruit (15:16) and keep Jesus’ commandments (15:10, 12, 14, 17). Deissmann traces the earliest usage of royal friendship language to the successors of Alexander⁷¹⁶ and concludes that John’s usage of *φιλία* language in 15:12–17 is in line with political titles that were applied to the friends of Egyptian kings.⁷¹⁷ Because Hellenistic documents and John 15:12–17 share common features in their portrayal of friendship, I suggest that

⁷¹⁵ Goldstein explains two types of Roman treaties—(1) friendship and (2) alliances. In defending these categories, he relies on Silvio Accame, *Il dominio romano in Grecia dalla guerra acaica ad Augusto*, Studi pubblicati dal R. Istituto italiano per la storia antica fasc 4 (Roma: Roma. A. Signorelli, 1946), 48, 54–55; Alfred Heuss, *Die völkerrechtlichen Grundlagen der römischen Aussenpolitik in republikanischer Zeit*, Klio Beiheft XXXI (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1933), 54, fn. 1; Eugen Täubler, *Imperium romanum* (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1913), 47, 420–22. For more analysis on the Roman treaties refer to Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 360–5.

⁷¹⁶ Deissmann understands the root of the title “friends of Caesar” that appears in John 19:12 as being Ptolemaic. He sees it as being parallel to *amicus Caesaris*. Adolf Deissmann, *Bible Studies: Contributions Chiefly from Papyri and Inscriptions to the History of the Language, the Literature, and the Religion of Hellenistic Judaism and Primitive Christianity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1901), 168, fn.1.

⁷¹⁷ Deissmann in his earlier study in 1901 indicated that *φίλος* in John 15:15 has the simple meaning of friend. However, in his fourth edition of *Light from the Ancient East* (1922), he rescinded his conclusion and saw John’s reference in line with ancient Egyptian usage. *Ibid.*, 168–69; Deissmann, *Light*, 378, fn. 2.

we may utilize these documents as a plausible lens for our understanding of Johannine friendship as royal friendship.

4.4.5 Summary

In this section, I examined friendship with God, Greek fictive friendship, the Roman *amicitia* and *clientela*, as well as the Hellenistic royal friendship as possible models of ancient friendship through which to understand John 15:12–17. I concluded against seeing friendship with God and simple fictive friendship as models for John 15:12–17. Instead, I suggest that friendship with Caesar and “friends of the king” in the Hellenistic royal courts establish a better framework through which to interpret Johannine friendship.

4.5 Jesus as a Royal Figure in GJohn

John presents Jesus as a royal figure from the beginning of the Gospel. As Brunson notes, “Jesus begins his ministry as king, enters Jerusalem as king, and is crucified as king.”⁷¹⁸ The noun βασιλεύς appears 16 times in GJohn,⁷¹⁹ 15 times referring to Jesus and once to Caesar (19:15). Even in 19:15 where “the Jews” declare “We have no king but Caesar,” the title of “king” is implicitly attributed to Jesus since the declaration of “the Jews” that Caesar is their king is made in contradistinction to Jesus as the king. John intertwines the presentation of Jesus as a king from chapter one, in which Nathaniel affirms Jesus to be the “king of Israel” (1:49), to the passion narrative at the end of the Gospel where the sign is posted above Jesus’ head on the cross, reading, “The King of ‘the Jews’” (19:19–21). Moreover, additional kingdom terminology is associated with Jesus throughout GJohn, thus further presenting him in a royal light, as the table below demonstrates.

⁷¹⁸ Andrew C. Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John: An Intertextual Study on the New Exodus Pattern in the Theology of John*, WUNT 2.158 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 224 fn. 32.

⁷¹⁹ The Johannine presentation of Jesus as king is consistent with the other three gospel writers. See Matt 2:2; 27:11, 37, 42; Mark 15:2–12, 18, 26; Luke 19:38; 23:2, 37.

The kingdom of God (βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ)	3:3, 5
My kingdom (ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμή)	18:36 (3x)
King (βασιλεύς)	6:15; 18:37 (2x); 19:15
The king (ὁ βασιλεύς)	12:15; 19:12, 14, 15
The “king of Israel” (βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ)	1:49; 12:13
The “king of ‘the Jews’” (ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων)	18:33, 39; 19:3, 19, 21 (2x)

When these statements about Jesus’ kingship are joined with the evidence concerning royal-friendships in the Greco-Roman and Hellenistic sources, the statement “I have called you friends” (15:15) can be understood as a declaration by a royal figure to his followers that he integrates them into his royal circle of friends. Below, I examine John’s royal motif in 1:49; 3:3–5; 6:14–15; 12:13–15; 18:33–19:21, and I demonstrate that Jesus’ regal status in GJohn buttresses the interpretation of 15:12–17 as referring to royal friendship.

4.5.1 John 1:49

John commences his theme of Jesus’ kingship in 1:49. In the verses preceding 1:49, we read that Jesus informs Nathaniel that he saw him under a tree; and Jesus also calls Nathaniel an “Israelite without guile” (v. 47). In response to Jesus’ words, Nathaniel affirms the royal status of Jesus by calling him the “king of Israel.”⁷²⁰ Brown views Nathaniel’s affirmation of Jesus’ kingship as evidence that Nathaniel believes in Jesus as Messiah.⁷²¹ Bauckham suggests that Nathaniel’s confession may

⁷²⁰ Keener suggests that “king” in GJohn usually refers to the Davidic ruler. Keener, *John*, 670. Anderson similarly sees the Davidic ruler behind this title. Anderson, *Christology*, 229. Meeks argues for Moses as the prophet-king in the background of Johannine royal language. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, NovTSup. Brunson argues that Ps 118 is the background of the Johannine royal language, especially in John 12:13–15 where the entrance of Jesus as king into Jerusalem is to be understood as the coming of Yahweh. Brunson, *Psalms 118*, 227–39. Cf. Hurtado, who engages Wright on a similar proposal and Hurtado concludes that in the NT there is a “remarkable christological appropriation of the theme of YHWH’s return. Despite Wright’s urgings, however, it is not clear that the theme of YHWH’s return was appropriated initially to interpret Jesus’s ministry, death, and resurrection. Instead, the identifiable NT instances of the appropriation of the theme present Jesus’s *parousia* as effectively being YHWH’s eschatological return/manifestation.” Larry W. Hurtado, “Participationism and Messiah Christology in Paul: YHWH’s Return to Zion. A New Catalyst for Earliest High Christology?,” in *God and the Faithfulness of Paul: A Critical Examination of the Pauline Theology of N.T. Wright*, ed. Christoph Heilig, J. Thomas Hewitt, and Michael F. Bird (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 417–38, citing 434.

⁷²¹ Brown, *John*, 87.

be rooted in Ps 2,⁷²² from which Nathaniel may have derived his conclusion that Jesus was Israel's Messiah and king.⁷²³ In Ps 2:2, 6–7, the messenger of God is called “his anointed” (τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ), the king (βασιλεύς), and son (Υἱός μου εἶ σὺ). The titles Son of God and the “king of Israel” (John 1:49) appear alongside other designations for Jesus: the Lamb of God (vv. 29, 36), rabbi (v. 38), Messiah (vv. 41, 49), “him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote” (v. 45), and Son of Man (v. 51). These sayings contribute to the messianic tone of the entire passage as John builds toward Nathaniel's confession in verse 49, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the king of Israel!” Barrett rightly states that this revelation of Jesus as the Christ is “not manifested to the world, but he is manifested to his own”;⁷²⁴ this is a distinction that was introduced already in 1:10–13. Because John 1:49 echoes the themes of Ps 2, it is reasonable to suggest that John immediately launches into a royal messianic Christology to establish Jesus' identity as a royal Messiah.⁷²⁵

4.5.2 John 3:3–5

The royal motif continues in the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus (3:3–5). In this passage, the use of the possessive genitive (τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, 3:3, 5) depicts Jesus' understanding of the kingdom as belonging to God. However, there is a shift in the literary presentation of the kingdom in GJohn from God's kingdom in John 3 to Jesus' kingdom in 18:36, ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ.⁷²⁶ Hengel observes the thematic parallels between 3:3–13 and 18:36–37 and concludes that the kingdoms of God and

⁷²² Bauckham, “Messianism,” 57–58.

⁷²³ Bauckham sees messianic implications from the title Son of God when he suggests that “on Nathanael's lips it [Son of God] is no more than another title for the royal Messiah of Jewish expectation.” Ibid., 59. In regard to the title, “king of Israel,” Bauckham sees no theological difference between the titles, “king of Israel” and “king of ‘the Jews,’” which was uttered by Pilate (18:33, 39; 19:19), as well as by the chief priests, “the Jews” (19:21), and the soldiers (19:3); rather, Bauckham, merely views the title, “king of ‘the Jews,’” as an adaptation to the Gentile audience. Thus, Bauckham ascribes messianic meaning to both, “king of ‘the Jews,’” and “king of Israel.” Ibid., 59–60.

⁷²⁴ Barrett, *John*, 71.

⁷²⁵ Additional OT messianic references that John could have relied upon to fill in his royal messianic theology are Isa 9:7; Jer 23:5; Ezek 37:24–25; Zech 9:9. These texts are derived from NA27 in John's passages that refer to Jesus' kingship.

⁷²⁶ Köstenberger, *Theology*, 448.

Christ are presented in GJohn as being identical.⁷²⁷ Specifically, both passages mention: the two worlds (i.e., earthly and heavenly, 3:12; 18:36), Jesus' arrival into the world as a foreigner (i.e., Son of Man,⁷²⁸ 3:13) and as a foreign king (18:36–37), the sending motif (3:2; 18:37),⁷²⁹ and the term *ἄνωθεν* (3:3, 19:11).⁷³⁰ Not only do these references indicate that Jesus' kingdom does not originate in this world,⁷³¹ they even equate the kingdoms of God and Christ. Thus, the emphasis on the kingdom in 3:3–13 and 18:36–37, coupled with the repeated references to the spiritual realm (3:2, 4, 7, 12, 27, 31), indicates that God's kingdom can be understood as Jesus' kingdom.⁷³²

4.5.3 John 6:14–15

As regards the theme of kingship, in 6:15 Jesus is portrayed refusing the forceful attempt⁷³³ of the crowd to make him king.⁷³⁴ This incident can be ascribed to popular messianic expectations coupled with the apparent correspondence between Jesus'

⁷²⁷ Hengel also notes that the conversations about the kingdom occur at the beginning and at the end of GJohn, both occurred between Jesus and a person in authority, both individuals address Jesus, and both individuals reject Jesus. Martin Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 350–55.

⁷²⁸ For further study on the descend-ascend motif in GJohn, note the seminal study by Wayne A. Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *JBL* 91 no. 1 (1972).

⁷²⁹ The motif of "sending" in GJohn (4:34; 5:23–24, 30, 37; 6:38, 39, 44; 7:16, 18, 28, 33; 8:16, 18, 26, 29; 9:4; 12:44, 45, 49; 13:20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; 20:21) further substantiates John's depiction of Jesus' claims that he is from another world.

⁷³⁰ Schnackenburg argues that *ἄνωθεν* is best translated as "from above" because of the other Johannine usage (e.g., 19:11, 23) and 3:31 where it undoubtedly means the same. Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:367–8.

⁷³¹ Brown, *John*, 869; Bultmann, *John*, 135 fn. 4, 654; David K. Rensberger, "The Politics of John: The Trial of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 103 no. 3 (1984): 408.

⁷³² Frey, "'Kingdom of God,'" 455; Keener, *John*, 1112; Moloney, *John*, 93, 494. See also Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:249. Van der Watt explains that Jesus and God "work together not in opposition to each other" in the kingdom. He continues, "God and his anointed king ruled Israel. Their eschatological expectations culminated in the hope of the restoration of this Kingdom, which will be ruled by the messiah." Van der Watt, *Family*, 379.

⁷³³ The term *ἁρπάζω* appears 4 times in GJohn (6:15; 10:12, 28, 29) and always has the meaning of violent snatching or seizing of an object. BDAG defines it as forceful snatching, theft, and dragging away of something. Foerster defines it as a firm, quick, violent capture of an object. *BDAG*, "*ἁρπάζω*," 134; Foerster, "*ἁρπάζω*," *TDNT*, 1:472–74.

⁷³⁴ Although there is a textual variant in 6:15 for *ἀνεχώρησεν* with some copyists substituting *φεύγει* (ⲛ, old Latin MSS, Vulgate, Syriac), NA27 and UBS4 favor *ἀνεχώρησεν* because of the ancient and widespread use of this variant (ⲡ⁷⁵ ⲛ² A B D L W, etc.). Barrett, *John*, 278; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 84; Metzger, *Commentary*, 181.

ministry and Moses' ministry.⁷³⁵ Moreover, the crowd's witness of and amazement by Jesus' miracles also arguably prompted the crowd to move to install Jesus as the king. However, while the crowd saw Jesus as a king whose kingdom belonged to this world,⁷³⁶ Jesus refused to concede to this act of coercion.

Jesus' refusal to accept the attempt at his coronation is, in the view of John, to be explained theologically—the time of Jesus' kingship had not yet come. To be sure, one might surmise, from a human perspective, that Jesus' swift escape from the attempted coronation to an isolated area (6:15) might be credited to his desire to avoid capture by Antipas,⁷³⁷ who would have viewed Jesus as a threat if the attempt to make Jesus king succeeded.⁷³⁸ However, Meeks compellingly argues that Jesus' escape is not due to an avoidance of being made king since for John Jesus is indeed a king, but instead due to his being made king prematurely. That is, in the view of John, Jesus' coronation is a matter of timing.⁷³⁹ John demonstrates that Jesus acts according to his own timeline, not the world's timeline. Indeed, in 12:23 John does depict Jesus as finally admitting that his hour of glorification had come. In other words, just as Jesus rejects his mother's pressure to be glorified (2:4), and just as he rejects his brothers' insistence that he "show himself to the world" (7:1–6), so in 6:14–15 Jesus refuses to be glorified through a premature coronation by the crowd. In the end, John's portrayal of Jesus' reaction demonstrates that the crowd had a misconception both of the nature of Jesus' kingship and of the timing of his glorification.

4.5.4 John 12:13–15

In 12:13–15, John depicts Jesus as being greeted by the crowd as the prophesied "king of Israel." The scene is reminiscent of the aforementioned coronation attempt in 6:1–15. John 12:13–15 parallels the triumphant entry narrated in the SG (Matt

⁷³⁵ Carson, *John*, 162, 272; Keener, *John*, 670.

⁷³⁶ Bultmann, *John*, 214.

⁷³⁷ Note that in Matt 14:13 Jesus withdrew from the region in which Herod executed John (see also Mark 6:14–44; Luke 9:7–17). Antipas presided over the trial of Jesus (Luke 23:8–12). Helen K. Bond, "Herod, Family," *NIDB*.

⁷³⁸ Keener, *John*, 670.

⁷³⁹ Meeks, *Prophet-King*, NovTSup, 89.

21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:29–38), with Matthew being the only one who does not include royal allusions. However, all four Evangelists place Ps 118:26 on the lips of the crowd—“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”⁷⁴⁰ The entire scene suggests a triumphal military or a royal entrance (see also 1 Macc 13:51; 2 Macc 10:7; 14:4).⁷⁴¹ While the Synoptic Evangelists discuss the finding of the donkey prior to the entrance into Jerusalem, John strategically places the same detail in the narrative after the crowd’s triumphant shouts, which allows John to depict Jesus as a humble king in contrast with the nationalistic fervor of the large crowd.⁷⁴² John’s divergence from the SG stresses Jesus’ rejection of the crowd’s triumphant shouts in order to accent the uniqueness of his kingship—it does not belong to this world (18:36). The broader context of 12:13–15 reveals the chief priests’ and Pharisees’ concern that Jesus will be welcomed as a political ruler (12:19) and that he will undermine their rule (11:47–50), a fear that was warranted in light of the large crowd’s welcoming of Jesus as king with the shouts of “hosanna.”

4.5.5 John 18:33–19:21

In the Johannine passion narrative, there are ten references to Jesus as king (18:33, 37 (2x), 39; 19:3, 12, 14, 15, 19, 21)⁷⁴³ and three references to his kingdom (18:36), which makes kingship the dominant Christological theme in this section. The motif of Jesus’ kingship takes a different tone in chapter 18, where a distinctive royal title is attributed to Jesus—“king of ‘the Jews’” (ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων)—in contrast to the previously noted title, “king of Israel” (ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ).⁷⁴⁴ John deploys

⁷⁴⁰ The cry of “Hosanna” was a cry of praise that was adopted from the festival of the Tabernacles and from Ps 118:26. During the feast of the Tabernacles, Ps 113–118 were sung every morning by the temple choir and when the verse containing the “Hosanna” cry was reached (118:26), each male in the temple shook willow and myrtle branches tied with palm branches and called them “hosannas.” Therefore, when Jesus entered Jerusalem, it was completely appropriate for the crowds to welcome him in with these branches and with the Hosanna greeting. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 210.

⁷⁴¹ Keener, *John*, 869; Meeks, *Prophet-King*, NovTSup, 86; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:374.

⁷⁴² Brown, *John*, 463; Stibbe, *John*, 133–34.

⁷⁴³ The only other title employed in this section for Jesus is Son of God (19:7). Reimund Bieringer, “My Kingship is Not of This World,” in *The Myriad Christ: Plurality and the Quest for Unity in Contemporary Christology*, ed. Terrence Merrigan and Jacques Haers (Leuven: University Press; Uitgeverij Peeters, 2000), 160.

⁷⁴⁴ In GJohn, Israel has a positive connotation while that is not always the case with “the Jews”; a distinction that can be extended to the titles “king of Israel” and “king of ‘the Jews.’” So Meeks,

the two titles in contradistinction to each other, the former being a title of derision and the latter being a title of euphoric excitement. This distinction comes from the observation that these two titles are used by different groups of people. Nathaniel and the crowd at the triumphal entry use the title “king of Israel,” and in this way they allude to the OT prophecies of a coming Davidic king (Isa 9:7; Jer 23:5; Ezek 37:21–25; Zech 9:9), whereas Pilate, the soldiers, and the antagonistic Jewish leaders use the latter title with derision.⁷⁴⁵ The soldiers address Jesus as the “king of ‘the Jews’” as they physically and verbally abuse him (19:3). Pilate addresses Jesus as the “king of ‘the Jews’” (18:33, 39) and writes it on the plaque placed above Jesus’ head on the cross (19:19). In response, the chief priests appeal to Pilate to change the title on the plaque from the “king of ‘the Jews’” to “This man said I am the king of ‘the Jews’” (19:21). This attempt to edit the plaque signals the leaders’ rejection of Jesus as their king.

The royal motif in the passion narrative reaches its climax in 19:14–15 where the Jewish leaders view Jesus as a messianic pretender who is a political rival to Caesar (19:15).⁷⁴⁶ In 19:14, Pilate exclaims to “the Jews,” “Here is your king,” and the chief priests respond with, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” (19:15). The response of the Jewish leaders to Pilate’s question “Shall I crucify your king?” (19:15) delineates the choice they have made in regard to Jesus’ claims of messianic kingship. That is, in stating “We have no king but Caesar” (19:15), the

Prophet-King, NovTSup, 82–83; Sjef Van Tilborg, *Reading John in Ephesus*, NovTSup 83 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 26. Bauckham dissents and suggests that “king of Israel” is a Jewish title while “king of ‘the Jews’” is a Gentile title. Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 230–31. Dunn indicates that “Israel” is a self-designating title whereas “Jews” is employed by an outsider like Pilate. James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 263. North suggests that “the Jews” is not a remarkable title in GJohn and is not to be viewed in terms of “us” versus “them” designation by John because: (1) John’s infusion of Israel/Israelite with religious meaning is not unique to him thus the use of the term is not a particular feature of his circumstances. (2) John deploys Israel/Israelite so infrequently that it cannot function as a robust alternative to “the Jews.” (3) Jewish writers seem to use both Jew and Israelite in self-reference and in communication with one another. Thus she concludes that “the Jews” is not remarkable and merely functions as a referent to Diaspora-Jews. Wendy E. S. North, *A Journey Round John: Tradition, Interpretation, and Context in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Chris Keith, vol. 534, LNTS (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 165–67.

⁷⁴⁵ Rensberger calls Pilate’s use of this title “ironic” and sardonic with the intent of embittering “the Jews.” Rensberger, “Politics,” 402, 403.

⁷⁴⁶ Brown, *John*, 872.

Jewish leaders chose the Roman emperor over Jesus. In this second mention of Caesar/the emperor in GJohn Van Tilborg observes that the change in person in verse 15 indicates that the Jewish leaders “no longer profess that God is the only king of Israel. In this way the dilemma ‘Jesus or the emperor’ is not only Pilate’s dilemma; it is just as much the dilemma for the leaders of Israel.”⁷⁴⁷ Brown concludes that these words, “We have no king but Caesar,” indicate that “The real trial is over, for in the presence of Jesus ‘the Jews’ have judged themselves; they have spoken their own sentence.”⁷⁴⁸ In sum, while the Jewish leaders reject Jesus as Messiah, John’s portrayal of the trial of Jesus overflows with royal themes and irony: while Jesus received the punishment of a criminal, the charge against him was for claims of royalty. I suggest that the Jewish leaders’ explicit rejection of Jesus as king in 19:15 is related to the theme of friendship in light of the dialogue between the Jewish leaders and Pilate in 19:12. In an attempt to pressure Pilate to execute Jesus, “the Jews” proclaim to Pilate: “If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against Caesar” (19:12). In this statement, Ford remarks, “The competing powers of Rome and Israel confront each other.”⁷⁴⁹ Ford goes on to say, “Like Judas, Pilate must make a decision about friendship.”⁷⁵⁰ Similarly I suggest that the mention of φίλος τοῦ Καίσαρος⁷⁵¹ reminds the reader of John’s last mention of friendship in 15:12–17. Just as Judas and Pilate must make a decision about friendship (18:1–5; 19:12), so the Jewish leaders are forced to choose with whom to align politically and in whose royal circle of friends to remain. I suggest that in 19:12–15 the issue in question is royal friendship, and that John seeks to show that the Jewish leaders prefer the earthly and Roman royal friendship instead of royal friendship with God’s agent.

⁷⁴⁷ Van Tilborg, *Reading*, 173. Meeks similarly affirms that “the Jews’” rejection of Jesus is equivalent to their rejection of God as their king. Brown understands that the chief priests are spokesmen for “the Jews” and therefore sees no significance in the change in person. Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*, 2 vols., ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 849; Meeks, *Prophet-King*, NovTSup, 81.

⁷⁴⁸ Brown, *John*, 894. See also Lance Byron Richey, *Roman Imperial Ideology and the Gospel of John*, CBQMS 43 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2007), 176, fn. 75.

⁷⁴⁹ Ford, *Redeemer-Friend*, 185.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 186.

Furthermore, the expression φίλος τοῦ Καίσαρος in 19:12 functions as a technical title that refers to a political relationship.⁷⁵² According to Cuss, the title “friend of Caesar,” was conferred on individuals with whom the emperor enjoyed a close friendship and who were therefore pronounced to be his friends as a reward for their loyalty.⁷⁵³ Brown indicates that in the early period of the Roman Empire, “friends of Augustus” were a “well-known society.”⁷⁵⁴ Also, Koester suggests that “friendship with Caesar could be warm or purely formal; it provided the emperor with loyal support and his friends with prestige and the ability to secure benefits for themselves and others.”⁷⁵⁵

Bammel defends the technical use of the title tracing it to the Roman imperial practice.⁷⁵⁶ Bammel points to Lucius Aelius Sejanus as Pilate’s patron who brokered the process of the emperor Tiberius conferring upon Pilate the title “friend of Caesar” (Tacitus, *Ann.* 6.7). Sejanus was subsequently suspected of plots against the imperial family⁷⁵⁷ and as a result he was arrested, tried by the senate, and executed in 31 CE. In fact, Sejanus’ treason against the imperial family was so offensive that even his youngest children were killed;⁷⁵⁸ and Sejanus’ clients were deposed (Tacitus, *Ann.* 6.19). Pilate, however, survived for another five years, which speaks to Pilate’s stable rule over Judea, until he was finally deposed in 36 CE.⁷⁵⁹ In view of the turn of events involving Sejanus, it is reasonable to suggest that Pilate was especially

⁷⁵¹ The title, “friend of Caesar,” has no parallel in the NT. Richey, *Roman*, 168.

⁷⁵² There is no consensus among scholars whether φίλος τοῦ Καίσαρος is a technical title or if it only describes Pilate’s loyalties to Tiberius. The following scholars associate the political relationship between Sejanus and Pilate as friends of Tiberius and interpret the title “friend of Caesar” as a technical political title, akin to *amicus Caesaris*. Von Ernst Bammel, “φίλος τοῦ Καίσαρος,” *TLZ* 77 no. 4 (1952): 205–10; Brown, *John*, 879–80; Brown, *Death*, 693–98; 843–44; Cuss, *Imperial Cult*, 48; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:262–63; Van Tilborg, *Reading*, 172; A. Weiser, “Καῖσαρ,” *EDNT*, 2:235–36. Cf., Jean-Pierre Lémonon, *Pilate et la gouvernement de la Judée: textes et monuments* (Paris: Gabalda, 1981), 275; Morris, *John*, 706; Van der Watt, *Family*, 361 fn. 1018; 362 fn. 1032. Carson calls it a semi-technical honorific. Carson, *John*, 607. Lincoln remains agnostic. Lincoln, *Truth*, 133; Lincoln, *John*, 468–69.

⁷⁵³ Cuss, *Imperial Cult*, 49.

⁷⁵⁴ Brown, *John*, 879.

⁷⁵⁵ Koester, *Symbolism*, 241.

⁷⁵⁶ Bammel also links φίλος τοῦ Καίσαρος to the Ptolemaic and Seleucid political practice of friendship with the king. Bammel, “φίλος τοῦ Καίσαρος,” 205–10.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*; Brown, *John*, 893–94.

⁷⁵⁸ *OCD*, “Aelius Seianus, Lucius (Sejanus),” 19.

⁷⁵⁹ Brown, *Death*, 693–95.

mindful of his political friendship with Tiberius because of Sejanus, albeit as a means of self-preservation.⁷⁶⁰ These events can account for Pilate's capitulation to the pressure from the Jewish leaders as an attempt to keep peace in Judea and not jeopardize his career as a Roman governor. In light of Pilate's friendship with Tiberius through Sejanus, John's mention of a "friend of Caesar" in 19:12 not only illustrates the Roman practice of royal friendships,⁷⁶¹ but it also implies that Jesus can be understood as a royal patron who is viewed to be in opposition to Caesar. Indeed, even if the Jewish leaders regard Jesus as an impostor, "the Jews" apply the title "king" to Jesus in their response to Pilate: "Everyone whom makes himself king, sets himself against Caesar" (19:12). It is against this background that "the Jews" challenge Pilate concerning his loyalty and friendship with Caesar, as if Pilate must choose friendship with Caesar or Jesus.⁷⁶²

4.5.6 Summary

John carefully weaves the details concerning Jesus' royal identity from the start of his Gospel to the Passion narrative. John opens and closes the book of Signs (chs. 1–12) with a reference to the kingship of Jesus, once again returning to it in the passion narrative (chs. 18–19). Throughout GJohn, Jesus was recognized as a king by different individuals. Jesus' committed followers saw him as a king (1:49), Jesus' half-hearted followers saw him as a king (6:14–15), and the crowd at the triumphal

⁷⁶⁰ Van Tilborg, *Reading*, 172. For Pilate's conflict with the Jews, see Josephus, *J.W.*, 2.169–74.

⁷⁶¹ BDAG, "Καῖσαρ," 498–99; Deissmann, *Light*, 377–78. Meeks similarly observes: "[O]ne of the characteristics of the Johannine treatment of the trial and the events that lead up to it is that the *political* implications are emphasized. In 11.48 a specifically political motivation is injected into the plotting of the Jewish authorities. John alone mentions the presence of Roman soldiers (ἡ...σπεῖρα καὶ ὁ χιλιάρχος) [19:12] at the arrest of Jesus. In the trial itself, the political-realistic element is introduced by the Jews at 19.12: 'If you release this man you are not Caesar's friend; anyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar's. The climactic rejection of Jesus by the Jews is the statement 'We have no king but Caesar,' in which the 'religious' and 'political' questions are shown to be inextricably merged." Meeks, *Prophet-King*, NovTSup, 64.

⁷⁶² Keener explains Pilate's initial reticence to condemn Jesus by suggesting that Pilate viewed Jesus as a sage (comparable to the Cynics) who was not a political threat to the state because Jesus' kingship was "a hypothetical kingship focused only on 'truth.'" Nevertheless, Keener admits that Pilate condemned Jesus because it was "politically imprudent to release a defendant charged with treason." Craig S. Keener, "'What is Truth?': Pilate's Perspective on Jesus in John 18:33–38," in *John, Jesus, and History, Volume 3: Glimpses of Jesus through the Johannine Jesus*, ed. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2016), 77–94, citing 93.

entry into Jerusalem greeted Jesus as the “king of Israel” (12:15). Also, the enemies of Jesus understood his claim to kingship but chose to reject it and instead pledged their allegiance to a Roman king—Caesar (19:12, 15, 17–22). Pilate was the final character in GJohn who engaged Jesus concerning his claim to royalty (18:36–37), which ultimately resulted in mockery and derision of Jesus as a king.⁷⁶³ Since the royal motif is part of the fabric of GJohn, it is plausible to understand Jesus’ words, “I call you friends,” as coming from a royal figure speaking to his followers and conferring on them the benefit of being friends of a king in response to their devotion to him through abiding, fruit-bearing, love, obedience, and witnessing (15:1–17, 27). The promise of friendship is offered in exchange for continual obedience to Jesus’ commands (note the present tense, *ἐὰν ποιῇτε ἃ ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι ὑμῖν*, 15:14) and in juxtaposition with a warning about hatred from the world that may cause the disciples to defect (16:1–4). The above study aimed at laying out the likely background for the theme of friendship as a benefit. In the next section I provide exegesis of 15:12–17 and the surrounding context to show how John deploys friendship as a benefit of continuous discipleship.

4.6 Royal Friendship and Discipleship in John 15:12–17

In the FD John injects a brief discussion about the disciples’ relationship to Jesus as his friends. In 15:13–16 John writes:

No one has greater love than this, that someone should lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you servants because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because the things which I heard from my Father, I made known to you.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁶³ Ford observes that the entire passion narrative is an allusion to the consecration of a monarch. She points to: “(1) The anointing by Mary (John 12:1–8), (2) the entry into Jerusalem (John 12:12–19), (3) the crowning and homage of a king (John 19:1–3), (4) the proclamation (John 19:4–5), (5) the acclamation (John 19:6–7), (6) the enthronement on the *bema*, judgment seat (John 19:13–6), (7) the naming (John 19:19–22), (8) the regal burial with abundance of spices (John 19:38–42).” Ford, *Redeemer-Friend*, 176.

⁷⁶⁴ For questions regarding the authenticity of Jesus actually speaking the words in 15:12–17, see J. G. Van der Watt, “Some Reflections on the Historicity of the Words ‘Laying Down Your Life for Your Friends’ in John 15:13,” in *John, Jesus, and History, Volume 3: Glimpses of Jesus through the Johannine Jesus*, ed. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2016), 481–91.

The scholarly dialogue concerning Johannine friendship in this passage pivots on the statement, “I no longer call you servants...but I have called you friends” (15:15). The implication of this phrase is that there was a previous incident when Jesus called his disciples servants; however, no such incident appears in GJohn. This could be an example of an analepsis in the text, in which the readers are being informed of an event that has not yet occurred in the temporal progression of the narrative.

Culpepper suggests that this is a completing analepsis, in that the readers are pointed to an event that has occurred, but of which they have not been informed yet.⁷⁶⁵ Culy, however, suggests that it is a repeating analepsis, which alludes back to a previous event for the purpose of clarification, emphasis, or recollection for the readers. Culy views the foot-washing scene as the prior event in which Jesus demonstrates an act of friendship to his disciples rather than superiority over them.⁷⁶⁶ Alternatively, by viewing the adverb οὐκέτι in verse 15 logically,⁷⁶⁷ it is possible to understand the statement “I no longer call you servants...but I have called you friends” as a redefinition of Jesus’ relationship with his disciples. That is, they are no longer servants, but they are now his close friends.

4.6.1 John 15:12–17 in Scholarly Dialogue

Before defending royal friendship as a lens through which to view 15:12–17, I first examine the dominant scholarly interpretations of this passage.⁷⁶⁸

⁷⁶⁵ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 59.

⁷⁶⁶ Culy, *Echoes*, 158–60. Moloney, Ford, and Schneiders similarly link friendship to foot-washing. Ford, *Redeemer-Friend*, 136–46; Moloney, *Glory*, 64; Francis J. Moloney, *Love in the Gospel of John: An Exegetical, Theological, and Literary Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 117; Sandra Schneiders, “The Foot Washing (John 13:1–20): An Experiment in Hermeneutics,” *CBQ* 43 (1981): 76–92.

⁷⁶⁷ Schnackenburg, *John*, 110–11.

⁷⁶⁸ The most significant works on this passage that discuss the concept of friendship are: Brock, “The Significance of Φιλέω and Φίλος,” 393–409; Liz Carmichael, *Friendship: Interpreting Christian Love* (London: T & T Clark, 2004); Culy, *Echoes*; Fitzgerald, *Perspectives on Friendship*; Fitzgerald, “Christian Friendship,” 284–96; Ford, *Redeemer-Friend*; William Klassen, “Parrēsia in the Johannine Corpus,” in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald, Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 227–54; Konstan, *Friendship*; Alan C. Mitchell, “‘Greet the Friends by Name:’ New Testament Evidence for the Greco-Roman *Topos* on Friendship,” in *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald, Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 225–62; Moltmann, “Open Friendship,” 29–42; O’Day, “Jesus as Friend,” 144–57; Eldho Puthenkandathil, *Philos: A Designation for the Jesus-Disciple Relationship—An Exegetico-*

Malina and Rohrbaugh suggest Greek fictive-kinship (see §4.4.2 above) as a prism through which to view 15:12–17.⁷⁶⁹ In such a relationship, both parties seek the well-being of one another as if they were family members.⁷⁷⁰ Malina and Rohrbaugh reject any interpretation of 15:12–17 as referring to a political royal friendship because the focus of the passage is sacrificial love and concern for the welfare of the other person, rather than politics.⁷⁷¹ They rely on Aristotle’s definition of friendship to understand fictive friendship. Aristotle writes, “A friend is one who exerts himself to do for the sake of another what he thinks is advantageous to him.”⁷⁷² Malina and Rohrbaugh continue their defense of fictive-friendship by pointing out that in the Roman world the honor of kin-friendship was a hereditary benefit, which guaranteed such friendship from generation to generation. While such friendship was typically exercised by social peers,⁷⁷³ in 15:12–17, social disparity is apparent in the terms such as servants, master, friends, command, obedience, choosing, appointment, and sending. Furthermore, 15:12–17 arguably still contains elements of fictive-friendship; however, these elements of relational intimacy and the royal friendship view are not mutually exclusive since there are ancient examples of monarchs who cared for their subjects (see §4.6.2). I conclude then that the Johannine statements concerning Jesus’ sacrificial love for his disciples as his friends do not preclude the possibility that Jesus inaugurated the royal friendship relationship between himself and his disciples.

Alternatively, Elliott singles out the language of mission in 15:16 and argues that Jesus’ commissioning of his disciples to continue his work is the motivation behind the rhetoric of slavery and friendship.⁷⁷⁴ She explains that in order to be a more effective agent who was commissioned by a superior to enforce his mission,

Theological Investigation of the Term in the Fourth Gospel, EUS 23.475 (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1993); Ringe, *Wisdom’s Friends*; Steve Summers, *Friendship: Exploring its Implications for the Church in Postmodernity*, T & T Clark Theology 7 (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2009).

⁷⁶⁹ Malina et al., *Commentary*, 235.

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷² Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.5.16 (John Henry Freese, LCL).

⁷⁷³ Malina et al., *Commentary*, 119, 236.

the agent needed the authority to make decisions, a privilege a slave did not have. Elliott points to two factors to support her proposal. First, a slave does what is commanded without personal knowledge of the details. Second, a slave does not have the ability to express reciprocal love to his master.⁷⁷⁵ Thus, in order to allow the commissioned agent to fulfill his function, intimacy with additional rights and privileges was provided.

It is undeniable that John stresses agency in the Gospel (e.g., 4:38; 13:20; 14:12; 17:18; 20:21) including in 15:16 where John has Jesus saying: “I appointed you to bear fruit.” However, 15:16 is the only reference to the motif of agency in the entire pericope of 15:12–17; therefore, to prioritize agency over the themes of love, knowledge, and sacrifice is unwarranted. John presents the relationship between Jesus and the disciples as follows: he chose them (6:70; 13:18; 15:16); he was their teacher (1:38, 49; 4:31; 9:2; 11:8; 13:13); the disciples addressed him as Lord (13:13–14); there was hierarchy in their relationship (13:16–17; 15:20); and he called them “little children” (13:33), which is not merely a term of endearment but simultaneously a term of relational hierarchy. Although there is no explicit reference to Jesus calling his disciples “slaves” or treating them as such, there is hierarchy in their relationship (see §4.6.2). This hierarchy is reinforced by Jesus’ command for the disciples to love one another (15:12, 17) and to bear fruit (15:16). Stählin notes that, “Their obedience to his ἐντέλλεσθαι (v. 14) brings out very sharply the fact that this is not at all a friendship between equals. He remains the κύριος.”⁷⁷⁶ Thus the hierarchical language in verses 12–17 does not merely convey the agency motif; but rather, as I argue in §4.6.2, the integration of the language of subordination with affection is more appropriately understood as royal friendship.

Ringe offers a different proposal to 15:12–17 by drawing parallels between W/wisdom and Jesus in GJohn as she argues that Jesus is W/wisdom incarnate⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷⁴ Susan M. Elliott, “John 15:15—Not Slaves but Friends: Slavery and Friendship Imagery and the Clarification of the Disciples’ Relationship to Jesus in the Johannine Farewell Discourse,” in *Proceedings: Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies* (Great Lakes, MI, 1993), 31–46.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁶ Stählin, “φιλέω,” *TDNT*, 165.

⁷⁷⁷ Ringe, *Wisdom’s Friends*, 46–63.

who makes the disciples “friends of God.”⁷⁷⁸ In her explanation, Ringe stresses the love commandment in verses 12 and 17 as central to understanding Johannine friendship. That is, the affective aspects of Johannine friendship are integral to the Johannine community in daily life and in times of crisis.⁷⁷⁹ She specifies that Jesus expresses friendship through his care for the sick and the dying (e.g., Lazarus’ death), through his death for his sheep, and through his meals that are integral to the fabric of the Gospel.⁷⁸⁰ Thus, the role of Jesus as the loving shepherd and the command for Jesus’ disciples to continue the same affection (e.g., 15:12, 17; 21:15–18) leads Ringe to observe friendship in light of John’s Christology and ecclesiology⁷⁸¹ as she describes the church as the “community defined by the gift and demand of friendship with God, Christ, and one another.”⁷⁸² Ringe rightly observes sacrificial love as an essential element of friendship, and her association of friendship with Christology and ecclesiology is commendable. However, as discussed in §4.4.1, friendship with God is not the most suitable lens for 15:12–17. Additionally, Ringe’s observations on the affective aspects of friendship are congruent with the royal friendship view since the shepherd-king image incorporates sacrificial love by the king toward his people (see §4.6.2).

Like Ringe, Bennema also sees W/wisdom as the inspiration for the friendship theme in GJohn as he observes soteriological overtones in the Johannine friendship discourse with the end goal of friendship with God.⁷⁸³ He underscores the link between friendship and discipleship to stress the relational intimacy between the believers and the Son through the Paraclete as “the bond of friendship.”⁷⁸⁴ He rightly points to intimacy, love, obedience, and knowledge as descriptive of the friendship-discipleship between Jesus and his disciples.⁷⁸⁵ Martin Scott similarly views Johannine friendship through the lens of Jewish sapiential writings as he concludes

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid., 1, 3, 62, 67, 72, 83, 93.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid., 64–83.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid., 76–77.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid., 81–83.

⁷⁸² Ibid., 3.

⁷⁸³ Bennema, *Power*, 9, 21–22, 62, 114, 117–18, 223–25.

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid., 223–25, 243, 247.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid., 223–25.

that W/wisdom seeks out her friends, enlightens them, and leads them to God's love.⁷⁸⁶

In light of the parallelism in the themes surrounding friendship in GJohn with Jewish sapiential writings, the W/wisdom motif appears as a strong candidate for the background of Johannine friendship. Moreover, Bennema, Scott, and Ringe rightly observe affective aspects of friendship in GJohn and in the W/wisdom literature.⁷⁸⁷ Thus, I certainly acknowledge the presence of affective aspects in the Johannine presentation of friendship, and I allow for the potential sapiential background to certain themes in GJohn (e.g., the *Logos*, revelation). However, I contend that W/wisdom is not the main lens for 15:13–16 because in the sapiential writings W/wisdom mediates friendship between God and people, whereas in 15:13–16 Jesus is not the *mediator* of friendship but is, rather, the *friend* himself.

Alternatively, Culy argues that the friendship between Jesus and his disciples mirrors the friendship between Jesus and the Father, which, he contends, consists in mutuality, unity, and equality.⁷⁸⁸ Culy derives these three ideals from the conceptual domain of friendship in the Greco-Roman writings.⁷⁸⁹ In contradistinction to Van der Watt's thesis that the major Johannine motif is the family into which friendship is subsumed (see chapter 2),⁷⁹⁰ Culy sees the language of friendship to be taken up by the ancient writers to highlight intimacy within a family and "to clarify what a familial relationship should look like."⁷⁹¹ In this way, he sees the motifs of family and friendship to be complementary,⁷⁹² with friendship "used in the Gospel of John to further enrich the characterization of Jesus' relationship with the Father and his followers."⁷⁹³ Culy first studies the passages that demonstrate the unity and intimacy between Jesus and God, and concludes that in these passages, John presents Jesus as

⁷⁸⁶ Scott, *Sophia*, 155–57.

⁷⁸⁷ Bennema, *Power*, 224–25; Ringe, *Wisdom's Friends*, 69–72, 77–82.

⁷⁸⁸ Culy, *Echoes*, 33, 91, 130, 178–179.

⁷⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 34–86, especially 49, 84. He also examines evidence of friendship in the Jewish and early Christian writings on friendship but derives his three notions of friendship from the Greco-Roman documents.

⁷⁹⁰ Van der Watt, *Family*.

⁷⁹¹ Culy, *Echoes*, 89.

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*, 88–95.

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*, 90.

God's friend.⁷⁹⁴ Culy then examines the passages in which φίλος is actually used—in the context of Jesus' relationship with John the Baptist, with Lazarus-Mary-Martha,⁷⁹⁵ and with the BD—and posits that John uses the conceptual field of friendship to describe these relationships (i.e., 3:29; 11:5, 11; 20:2).⁷⁹⁶

Culy then turns to 15:13–16 to argue for an intimate friendship between Jesus and his disciples that mirrors the God-Jesus friendship relationship.⁷⁹⁷ Culy points to the household motif in 8:34–36 with God, Jesus, slaves, and sons as characters that can parallel the slavery and friendship language in 15:13–16. John portrays Jesus in 8:35 as telling “the Jews,” “The slave does not have a permanent place in the house, the son has a permanent place.” That is, the son has a higher status and a closer relationship to the head of the household than a slave does. This household imagery evokes relational intimacy between members of the house that Culy views as friendship.⁷⁹⁸ Culy writes, “It is probably best to recognize that the metaphors of friendship, family, sonship, and even slavery all provide insights into Jesus' followers' relationship with both him and the Father.”⁷⁹⁹ Culy rightly observes that Jesus condescends to befriend his disciples (e.g., 13:1–20) and that he elevates their status from slaves to friends, as was expected of a good superior friend (15:13–16).⁸⁰⁰ In this, Culy sees 8:34–36 and 15:13–16 as expressing a “significant deepening of intimacy”⁸⁰¹ in the relationship between Jesus and the disciples. Culy rightly stresses intimacy within the royal household through the image of the ideal friendship as seen in Jesus' promise to die for his friends (15:13) and to speak frankly with them (v. 16).

Nevertheless, I suggest that there are two weaknesses in Culy's argument. First, it lacks lexical support since John does not use the term φίλος to describe Jesus'

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid., 87–129.

⁷⁹⁵ Culy observes that Jesus' friendship for the Bethany friends is expressed in his willingness to risk his life for them. See 11:8, 16; 15:13. This is demonstrated by Jesus most vividly in 19:30 where Jesus gives up his life (see also 10:16). Ibid., 132.

⁷⁹⁶ Ibid., 130–35.

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid., 152, 165.

⁷⁹⁸ Ibid., 165. Bennema makes the same connection between 8:34–36 and 15:13–16, observing that Jesus' friends are the children of God. Bennema, *Power*, 224–25.

⁷⁹⁹ Culy, *Echoes*, 165.

⁸⁰⁰ See Cicero, *On Friendship*, 20.71–72.

relationship with God. There is not a single Johannine passage that Culy cites to show unity, mutuality, and equality between God and Jesus that designates Jesus as God's friend or vice versa.⁸⁰² Admittedly, Culy approaches his study with reliance on the conceptual background to argue for an ideal friendship between God and Jesus, but in the passages from which Culy derives the principles of ideal friendship (i.e., unity, mutuality, and equality)⁸⁰³ John repeatedly stresses Jesus' sonship, not friendship with the Father.⁸⁰⁴ Thus, Culy seems to overstate the notion of friendship between God and Jesus.⁸⁰⁵

Second, Culy overstates the prominence of the friendship imagery in GJohn. He asserts that "the language of friendship pervades the Gospel from beginning to end and serves as a primary vehicle for characterizing the relationships that are introduced in the Prologue."⁸⁰⁶ But this observation seems to overlook the scarce use of φίλος (6 times, 3:29; 11:1–16; 15:13–16; 20:2).⁸⁰⁷ Even if we grant that John develops ideal friendship imagery through the concepts of unity, equality, and mutuality, the image of family is evoked more naturally than friendship due to explicit references to sonship and fatherhood. Additionally, Culy's elevation of friendship leads him to press friendship imagery into certain passages that do not have friendship in the near context. For example, in 19:12–15 he suggests that "the Jews" reject friendship with God because they choose Caesar. But John never discussed friendship between people and God, only between Jesus and people; thus it would be more appropriate to suggest that "the Jews" are rejecting friendship with Jesus in favor of Caesar.⁸⁰⁸ Similarly, Culy's interpretation of 18:20 overstates friendship imagery behind the function of παρρησία in that text when he argues that

⁸⁰¹ Culy, *Echoes*, 165.

⁸⁰² *Ibid.*, 118–29.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, 118–24. E.g., John 5:19–29; 10:30; 17:1–26.

⁸⁰⁴ As noted in §2.1, Jesus is portrayed as calling God his Father 25 times, and of the 120 times that God is called "Father" in GJohn, 80 percent refer to God being the Father of Jesus.

⁸⁰⁵ Lamb similarly critiques Culy for "giving undue prominence" to the motif of friendship between Jesus and the Father. David Lamb, review of "*Echoes of Friendship in the Gospel of John* by Martin Culy," *BTB* 42 no. 1 (2012): 51–52.

⁸⁰⁶ Culy, *Echoes*, 178.

⁸⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 178–80. As noted in §1.8.1, I suggest that friendship is one of the three key benefits in GJohn with a peculiar meaning of "royal friendship" based on the exegesis of 15:12–17 and the royal Christology in the rest of GJohn.

the use of *παρρησία* suggests that Jesus extended friendship to the world. However, the natural reading of 18:20–21 seems to be a reference to Jesus’ public teaching in the synagogues and in the temple, which is substantiated by Jesus directing the high priest to ask his listeners about the content of his teaching.⁸⁰⁹ Consequently, because John’s vocabulary does not indicate a prioritization of friendship above other images, and because John does not designate Jesus as God’s *φίλος* (nor vice versa), I find Culy’s proposal unconvincing.

Van Tilborg interprets Johannine friendship through the lens of the family/household motif. Van Tilborg suggests that Jesus “creates an *oikos* of mutual friends who have found each other on the basis of mutual freedom and of kinship relationships.”⁸¹⁰ Van Tilborg then explains that Jesus is part of the household of the Father and that he functions as the mediator who enlarges the Father’s household by adding friends into the Father’s household. Van Tilborg writes:

A man’s friends are part of his *oikos*. They determine the social position of the *oikos* and are determined by it. The greater and more important the *oikos* is, the more numerous and important are the friends; but also the more important it is to be a friend of the *kyrios* of such an *oikos*. Jn 15,12–17 presupposes imaginarily a powerful *oikos* with a father-*kyrios* who heads a household in which the son plays an important role as mediator between selected friends and the absolute sovereignty of the Father.⁸¹¹

Although I affirm the importance of the family motif in GJohn (see chapter 2) and though I recognize that John mentions the Father twice in 15:15–16, I disagree with Van Tilborg that the household motif should be the lens through which to interpret 15:12–17. My critique of Van Tilborg’s proposal hinges on two points. First, John states that Jesus makes his disciples his own friends (*φίλοι μου*), not friends of the Father. Whereas Van Tilborg’s interpretation suggests that the friends in the household are friends of the *κύριος*-Father figure, in GJohn the disciples are never

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid., 169.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid., 168–69. Elsewhere Culy suggests that “the pervasive friendship language in the Fourth Gospel may have led to subtle echoes of friendship motif when this term [*παρρησία*] was used.” Ibid., 107 fn. 73.

⁸¹⁰ Van Tilborg, *Imaginative*, 116.

⁸¹¹ Ibid., 149. Coloe also understands 15:13–16 as teaching about friendship within the household and she cites Van Tilborg for support. Coloe, *Dwelling*, 162–64.

called God's friends. Second, while Van Tilborg states that the Father is the *κύριος* of the household, in 15:15 (see also 13:13–14) it is Jesus who is called *κύριος* not the Father.⁸¹² This, however, would imply that Jesus is the master of the household with friends, not the Father, and yet in GJohn Jesus is never presented as having a household, only the Father has a household (8:35; 14:2–3). Consequently, viewing Johannine friendship in 15:12–17 through the lens of the family/household imagery is not consistent with the passage. In contrast to Van Tilborg's conclusions, the most plausible explanation of Jesus being the *κύριος* who makes friends of himself while not possessing a house is to view this friendship as a royal friendship rather than as a friendship within a household. Thus I find Van Tilborg's view unpersuasive.

Van der Watt views friendship as a subset of the family dynamic.⁸¹³ Van der Watt suggests that the correct interpretation of 15:13–16 and its relation to friendship is to “regard friendship as the enrichment of the existing familial relations.”⁸¹⁴ According to Van der Watt, friendship in GJohn describes “the intimate relation between Jesus and his own...[it] is not ordinary friendship, but friendship with the unique Son...this contributes to the global familial network.”⁸¹⁵ Admittedly, the two references to the “Father” in 15:15–16 allow for the interpretative framework of the family metaphor, especially in light of the mention of the Father in the broader context (15:1, 8, 9, 10, 16, 23, 24, 26). Yet, there are no additional familial terms in John 15 (e.g., Son, children, brothers) that necessitate friendship to be viewed as a subset of the family motif. Van der Watt accepts Van Tilborg's notion of friendships in a household, but he also cautions that these same friends are children.⁸¹⁶ Thus, although John employs both of these metaphors, Van der Watt suggests that while they “should be seen in conjunction with each other,” in his view, “in these interpersonal dynamics the intimate familial relations are dominant.”⁸¹⁷

⁸¹² Out of 52 uses of *κύριος* in GJohn, only three uses (1:23; 12:38 (2x)) refer to God from Isaiah's prophecies, the remaining 49 uses refer to Jesus.

⁸¹³ Van der Watt, *Family*, 364–65.

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 365 fn. 1053.

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 367.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 365.

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 365–66. Van der Watt argues for the family theme to be superior to the friendship motif and thus he critiques Van Tilborg's conclusion that “Jn 15,12–17 is the affectively most poignant

Van der Watt recognizes that the hierarchical statements in 15:14 and 16 (i.e., “do what I command you...I chose you and appointed you”) necessitate an explanation as to their place within the family dynamic. Van der Watt appeals to the lord-slave model⁸¹⁸ and suggests that “friendships could also exist between unequals.”⁸¹⁹ However, according to Malina and Rohrbaugh, kin-fictive relationships were typically between social equals.⁸²⁰ Thus because there is obvious hierarchy in 15:13–16, fictive-kin friendship is perhaps not the best model for Johannine friendship. In addition to my critique of the family/household interpretation above, I suggest that the hierarchical language in 15:14 and 16 is more consistent with royal friendship than with family, particularly because the passage has connotations of social disparity that characterized the relationship between a king/emperor and his friends. Thus, I am proposing a more nuanced understanding of friendship that accounts for the relational disparity in verses 14 and 16, a disparity that is not considered by Van Tilborg’s⁸²¹ and Van der Watt’s proposals. Admittedly, both Van Tilborg and Van der Watt allow for regal overtones in the friendship relationship, but they ascribe the royal character to God as the Father-king.⁸²² However, there are only two passages that refer to the “kingdom of God” (3:3, 5), and John does not portray God as the Father-king in those two verses; in fact, John makes no remarks at all regarding the status of God as King in these two texts.⁸²³ Yet Jesus is repeatedly depicted by John as a royal figure (see §4.5).

In sum, while household terminology is present in the context of 15:12–17 (e.g., Father, servants, Lord), the main point of the passage is not that Jesus brings the disciples into the divine family, but that he integrates them into friendship with

statement about the relationship between Jesus and his disciples.” See Van Tilborg, *Imaginative*, 154; Van der Watt, *Family*, 362 fn. 1031.

⁸¹⁸ Van der Watt, *Family*, 364–65, 367–69.

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 365.

⁸²⁰ Malina et al., *Commentary*, 119, 236.

⁸²¹ Van Tilborg points to the feet washing scene and the subsequent command to love in 13:4–38 as illustrative of the household in which Jesus is the hospitable friend who sacrifices for his friends. The overlapping themes of love and laying down one’s life in 15:12–17 with 13:4–38 confirm the link between these two passages. Van Tilborg, *Imaginative*, 158–60.

⁸²² Van Tilborg also suggests a regal character to the friendship relationship but he views God as the Father-king. *Ibid.*, 163. Van der Watt similarly affirms God as Father-king. Van der Watt, *Family*, 378–81, esp. fn. 1123.

himself as a benefit of continuous discipleship (e.g., 15:8). Therefore, Van Tilborg's and Van der Watt's proposals to view friendship within the family motif seem to minimize the distinctiveness of the friendship image in GJohn (see arguments below) and do not fully integrate the hierarchical and friendship terminology in 15:12–17.

4.6.2 Exegesis of John 15:12–17

In light of the weaknesses in the above interpretations of Johannine friendship, I propose that 15:12–17 should be understood as royal friendship. In addition to the evidence from the Hellenistic writings that support the royal political understanding of 15:12–17 (§4.4.4) and the survey of John's portrayal of Jesus as a royal figure (§4.5), the exegesis of 15:12–17 yields four additional arguments that substantiate the notion of royal friendship between Jesus and his disciples. Prior to expounding upon these four reasons, it is necessary to comment on the structure of this passage to demonstrate that 15:12–17 should be treated separately from 15:1–11 which would then warrant treating Johannine friendship as a peculiar and prominent motif in GJohn.

Although Segovia observes that the discourse of 15:1–17 “can be regarded as a coherent artistic whole that is carefully developed from the beginning to the end,”⁸²⁴ scholars have diverging opinions about the composition of this passage.⁸²⁵ I propose to divide 15:1–17 into verses 1–11 and verses 12–17.⁸²⁶ The clause *ταῦτα λελάληκα* in verse 11 (also in 14:26; 15:25; 16:1, 4, 6, 25, 33) signals a transition⁸²⁷

⁸²³ For my treatment of the “kingdom of God,” see §2.2.2.

⁸²⁴ Segovia, *Farewell*, 163.

⁸²⁵ Segovia divides the discourse between vv. 1–8 and vv. 9–17 by stressing the theme of abiding in the vine (vv. 1–8) and abiding in love (vv. 9–17). *Ibid.*, 125–31. Elsewhere Segovia suggests that vv. 1–8 is about belief and vv. 9–17 promote love. Segovia, *Love*, 117–20, 189. Brown and Keener divide the text into vv. 1–7 and vv. 8–17. Brown, *John*, 665–68; Keener, *John*, 988–1016. Bernard divides the passage into vv. 1–8, 9–11, and 12–17. Bernard et al., *John*, 2:477–85. Bultmann sees parallelism in these two sections—“remain in me” (vv. 1–8) and “remain in love” (vv. 9–17). Bultmann, *John*, 529, 537, 546. Schnackenburg sees vv. 1–25 as a unit. Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:91–92. For additional discussion regarding the division of 15:1–17, see footnote 606.

⁸²⁶ The same verse division is affirmed by Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1972), 488–93; John Marsh, *The Gospel of St. John*, PNTC (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), 518, 523; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:92–93, 95–96.

⁸²⁷ Barrett, *John*, 467; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 261, 269; Brown, *John*, 650; Köstenberger, *John*, 441; Moloney, *Glory*, 56; Ridderbos, *John*, 519; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:82.

from the theme of the vine and the branches (15:1–11)⁸²⁸ to friendship (15:12–17), thus verses 12–17 should be seen as a separate unit. This is further supported by the parallel clause ταῦτα ἐντέλλομαι in verse 17 where it also indicates a transition from verse 17 to verse 18.⁸²⁹ Moreover, 15:12–17 can be seen as a separate unit because these verses are framed by an inclusio “to love one another” (vv. 12, 17).⁸³⁰

Admittedly, the mention of love in verses 9 and 10 links verses 1–11 with verses 12–17; however, the focus in verses 9–10 is to love Jesus, whereas in verses 12–17 the command is to love each other.⁸³¹ There are, of course, other overlapping themes between verses 1–11 and 12–17, namely, the preeminence of the Father (vv. 1, 9, 15, 16), fruit (vv. 2, 4, 5, 8, 16), commandment/word (vv. 3, 7, 10, 12, 14, 17), abiding (vv. 4, 5, 6, 7, 16), love (vv. 9, 10, 12, 13, 17), and answered requests (vv. 7, 16). However, despite this development of the various motifs in the larger section of verses 1–17, the clear summary statement in verse 11 along with the inclusio of love in verses 12–17 do indicate a literary distinction between verses 1–11 and verses 12–17.⁸³² Allowing for the possibility that verses 12–17 form their own unit, we can investigate this segment in its own right as we determine the main theme of 15:12–17.

Thus, I present four reasons as to why the preferred interpretation of 15:12–17 is the royal friendship between Jesus and his disciples.

4.6.2.1 Royal Friendship and the Shepherd-King Motif

First, royal friendship is the preferred understanding of this passage because 15:12–17 is linguistically linked with 10:1–18, a passage that presents Jesus as a shepherd-king who cares for his subordinates. Specifically, the use of the verb τίθημι in 15:13

⁸²⁸ John 15:1–11 is treated in chapter 3.

⁸²⁹ Segovia similarly sees a break after 15:17. Segovia, *Farewell*, 125–31.

⁸³⁰ Moloney, *Love*, 119.

⁸³¹ Segovia, *Farewell*, 125, 130, 162.

⁸³² Examination of the mss. \mathfrak{P}^{66} & A B does not register major paragraph units breaks between v. 11 and v. 12, and v. 17 and v. 18 so as to isolate vv. 12–17 as a separate unit. That is, mss. indicate sentence unit breaks not paragraph units breaks. Thus, while there is no physical evidence in the mss. to treat vv. 12–17 separately, below I present conceptual reasons for my approach. Segovia also observes a minor break in 15:11, thus lending minor support for the division between vv. 1–11 and vv. 12–17. Ibid., 125–27.

resembles the use of the same verb in 10:1–18 (vv. 11, 15, 17, 18). The association of these two pericopes is strengthened by the fact that outside of these two passages, John does not employ *τίθημι* to describe Jesus laying down his life for his followers. In 10:1–18, John likens Jesus to the shepherd-king who cares for his people as a shepherd cares for his sheep.⁸³³ The reference to the good shepherd evokes OT texts where rulers were depicted as shepherds of their people.⁸³⁴ Even God is presented in the OT as shepherding his people.⁸³⁵ Similarly, the Roman emperor Tiberius is reported as describing his servants from Egypt as his sheep (Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 57.10.5). In another instance, Suetonius presents Tiberius as advising the prefect of Egypt on being a good shepherd of his people (Suetonius, *Tib.* 32.2). Ford joins the Johannine images of the shepherd-king with Jesus' royal depiction in GJohn and Ford rightly designates John's portrayal of Jesus as a "friendly monarch."⁸³⁶ Ford further observes that, "With the advent of Hellenization, the concept of 'friendship' changed. There was an emphasis not so much on the 'friendship' of the body of citizens but on the *philo*i of the monarch."⁸³⁷ Because of John's portrayal of Jesus as king in the passion narrative, Jesus is portrayed as the suffering friend-king who dies for his friends.⁸³⁸ Ford correctly understands Jesus as a royal friend in GJohn and she further links this image to friendship with God when she writes: "John reveals Christ as wisdom incarnate who makes holy souls friends of God."⁸³⁹ While Ford is correct in her conclusion of Jesus as the royal friend to the disciples, for reasons stated in §4.4.1, I do not see friendship with God as part of the friendship motif in 15:12–17. The depiction of emperors and kings as "shepherds" and especially the depiction of Jesus as the good shepherd who lays down his life for his

⁸³³ Ford writes, "'Shepherd' is a synonym for 'ruler' and thus the discourse could be called 'the ideal sovereign.'" Ford, *Redeemer-Friend*, 180–81. See also Meeks, *Prophet-King*, NovTSup, 307–12.

⁸³⁴ David in Ps 78:70–72; the Messiah in Ezek 34:23; 37:24; Mic 5:2 with Matt 2:6; Ps 2:9 (LXX); Joshua in Num 27:15–18; and negative examples come from Jer 23:1–4; Isa 56:9–12; Ezek 34; Zech 11.

⁸³⁵ Ps 80:1; 23:1; Isa 40:11.

⁸³⁶ Ford, *Redeemer-Friend*, 168–89, citing 180.

⁸³⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁸³⁸ *Ibid.*, 182–93.

⁸³⁹ *Ibid.*, citing 115, see also 117.

followers⁸⁴⁰ through the use of *τίθῃμι* helps to recognize the royal overtones in the language of 15:13–16.⁸⁴¹

4.6.2.2 Royal Friendship and Social Disparity

Second, in defense of the royal friendship imagery, we should also note the language of disparity in the status between Jesus (the superior) and his disciples (the subordinates) as expressed in Jesus' commands to his disciples. Crook⁸⁴² and Malina⁸⁴³ have noted that ancient friendship typically involved social peers. Crook comments on the parity/disparity in ancient friendships: "In no ancient definition of friendship does one find that a friend is one who does what he is commanded. A lack of status equality must be present in order for one 'friend' to command another."⁸⁴⁴ Crook further explains that, as regards hierarchical relationships, "Friendship language was often used to place a veneer over relationships of dependence precisely because of the status consciousness of these cultures. To be a dependent was common, yet shameful."⁸⁴⁵ In 15:12–17, John depicts Jesus as superior to his disciples for Jesus reserves the right to command them even after calling them friends (vv. 14, 16, 17; also note command language in 13:14–18, 34; 14:15, 21–24; 15:10, 12).⁸⁴⁶ In 15:14, social disparity is evident by means of the conditional

⁸⁴⁰ Meeks affirms the parallelism between Jesus as king and the good shepherd, arguing that the emphasis on his death demonstrates the inauguration of his kingship. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, NovTSup, 68, 80–81.

⁸⁴¹ Pace Culy, *Echoes*, 165 fn. 146, 169.

⁸⁴² Zeba A. Crook, "Fictive-Friendship and the Fourth Gospel," *TS* 67 no. 3 (2011): Article 997, pp. 1–7.

⁸⁴³ Malina et al., *Commentary*, 119, 236.

⁸⁴⁴ Crook, "Fictive-Friendship," 6. Crook interprets the hierarchical language in 15:12–17 as descriptive of a fictive-friendship. Yet as I argued in §4.4.2, admittedly Johannine friendship incorporates aspects of fictive friendship, but I suggest that friendship in 15:12–17 surpasses mere fictive friendship and aligns more closely with royal friendship.

⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸⁴⁶ In his published dissertation on *φίλος* in GJohn, Puthenkandathil notes the aspect of subordination in Johannine friendship when he defines it as "master-disciple relationship." Although Puthenkandathil claims that "no scientific doctoral study has ever been done" from a theological perspective of *φίλος* in GJohn, his work is a general etymological and contextual investigation of *φίλος* in GJohn. He emphasizes the obvious observations of the text as he examines the narratives of Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and the disciples. He does not demonstrate how the conceptual background of *φίλος* can enhance our understanding of Johannine friendship, and he does not examine the contribution of 19:12 to Johannine friendship. Puthenkandathil, *Philos*, citing 6, 243. For similar critiques of Puthenkandathil's work, see J. Edgar Bruns, review of "*Philos, a Designation for the*

particle *ἐάν* coupled with the present tense of *ποιῆτε* in the clause *ἐάν ποιῆτε ἃ ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι ὑμῖν*, which indicates that friendship with Jesus is contingent upon continuous obedience to his commands.⁸⁴⁷ In fact, obedience to Jesus' commands is the first expectation of Jesus' friends (vv. 10, 12, 14, 17).⁸⁴⁸ The command that immediately follows the discussion of hierarchy and one that frames the entire pericope is the charge for the disciples to love each other (vv. 12, 17). The importance of love to the FD and to 15:12–17 is affirmed through the repeated references to love in the FD (31 times—*ἀγαπάω/ἀγάπη*; 3 times—*φιλέω*), four of which appear in 15:12–17. Additionally, the inclusio of love that frames the friendship motif between verses 12 and 17 stresses the link between love and friendship.⁸⁴⁹ Segovia notes that the definite article and the emphatic personal pronoun *ἐμή* in 15:12 (*αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ ἣ ἐμή, ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους*) identify the love command to be preeminent.⁸⁵⁰ The emphasis on love continues in verse 14 through the reference back to the command in verse 12 and through the personal pronoun *ἐγὼ* preceding the verb *ἐντέλλομαι*. Moreover, in verse 14 John employs the personal pronoun *ὕμεῖς* in the emphatic position at the front and at the end of the verse to spotlight the disciples as those who must fulfill the command to love. While Jesus' command for the disciples to love one another demonstrates his superior status over them, the fact that Jesus himself demonstrates this love (v. 13) implies that Jesus is not just their superior, but also their friend. The disciples' continual obedience to Jesus' command to love will keep them in friendship with Jesus.⁸⁵¹

Jesus-Disciple Relationship: An Exegetico-Theological Investigation of the Term in the Fourth Gospel,” *CBQ* 57 no. 2 (April 1995): 413–14; Culy, *Echoes*, 8; Van der Watt, *Family*, 363 fn. 1033.

⁸⁴⁷ Pace Brodie who suggests that John's teaching on friendship removes all authoritarianism and command language and instead there is genuine mutuality. Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 483–84.

⁸⁴⁸ So Segovia, *Farewell*, 158. Tolmie also stresses the intimacy of friendship to the discipleship relationship by noting that the disciples do not merely obey Jesus because he commands them but as his friends, they want to obey him. Surprisingly, Tolmie does not discuss the hierarchical structure in verses 14 and 16, but he merely views friendship as expression of affection. Tolmie, *Farewell*, 213.

⁸⁴⁹ Ringe suggests that love functions on three levels in this discourse—redemptive love (13:1), love of comfort (13:31–35), and sacrificial love (13:1–17). Ringe, *Wisdom's Friends*, 66.

⁸⁵⁰ Segovia, *Farewell*, 154–63.

⁸⁵¹ Segovia acknowledges that “the status of *φίλοι* is said to be preserved only by carrying out Jesus' commands,” but Segovia does not entertain the possibility of royal friendship being the basis for

Moloney, rightly affirms the importance of love to friendship,⁸⁵² yet he fails to explain how Jesus as the friend of his disciples can demand obedience.⁸⁵³ Moloney observes that as the disciples transition from being slaves to becoming friends with Jesus, they are no longer “δοῦλοι depending upon the wishes and the whims of a master, but φίλοι, intimate and equal associates with Jesus.”⁸⁵⁴ Moloney does not discuss how the friendship between Jesus and the disciples is to be reconciled with the statements about Jesus’ right to demand obedience and Jesus’ right to send his disciples on a mission. In fact, in the succeeding pericope that features the world’s hatred for the disciples in 15:18–27, John portrays Jesus as the master and his disciples as the servants when John writes, “Remember the word that I said to you, a slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also” (15:20; 17:14). If Jesus intended to eradicate any notion of hierarchy, why does John portray Jesus as addressing his disciples as slaves in verses 20, after he already declared in verse 15, “I no longer call you slaves”? I discern that Jesus means to retain the hierarchical distinction that was present between a royal figure and his circle of advisers, in this case, through the terminology of “master” and “slaves.” This hierarchical difference and the expectation to serve is explained by Hahn as follows:

The fact that a disciple is not above his master means that his authority is mediated and that he is always bound to the person of Jesus. On the other hand, he can become like his master, and this means that he may represent his Lord in the fullest sense. Discipleship is thus characterized by this peculiar subordination of the disciple to his master and yet at the same time by being his equal in the service to which he is called.⁸⁵⁵

This same distinction between Jesus as Lord and the disciples as slaves was previously introduced at the foot-washing scene with a charge to the disciples to

Jesus’ demand for obedience. Segovia, *Love*, 114–16, citing 279 fn. 197. See also, Segovia, *Farewell*, 158.

⁸⁵² Moloney, *Love*, 99–133.

⁸⁵³ Ibid., 118.

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid., 119.

⁸⁵⁵ Hahn et al., *Die Anfänge*, 30.

imitate their Lord. After washing his disciples' feet (13:1–11),⁸⁵⁶ Jesus says, “A slave is not greater than his master, neither is the one sent greater than the one who sent him” (13:16). Judge indicates that this relational disparity was common since there was an expectation in ancient friendship of the inferior's dependence on the superior. Judge writes, “[Conditions for friendship] would not have seemed odd to anyone in antiquity, because that is what friendship meant. It was a close bond of intimacy which depended upon conformity to the wishes of the more powerful.”⁸⁵⁷ Jesus' wishes are explained in 13:14–15: “So if therefore, I, your Lord and teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example, just as (καθώς) I have done for you, you should do also.” Likewise, in 15:12–13 John writes, “This is my commandment that you love one another just as (καθώς) I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that he should lay down his life for his friends.” John uses the comparative adverb καθώς (13:34; 15:12) to present Jesus' love as a model for his disciples.⁸⁵⁸ Jesus' love extends beyond washing his disciples' feet;⁸⁵⁹ it climaxes with him sacrificing his life on their behalf (10:11, 15, 17; 15:13),⁸⁶⁰ and they are expected to lay down their lives also (12:24–25).

Jesus' expectation of his disciples to imitate him is also seen in the play on the meaning of τίθημι in “lay down his life” (θῆ) in 15:13 and in “appointed” (ἐθίκα) in 15:16. That is, the commissioning of the disciples involves the anticipation of the disciples' self-sacrifice for the work of Jesus (e.g., 12:25–26; 15:18–20; 16:2; 21:18–19). Bennema rightly says, “Love is *the* hallmark of friendship and finds its ultimate expression in the laying down of one's ψυχή for one's friends” (*italics original*).⁸⁶¹

⁸⁵⁶ Summers provides an interesting insight about the relationship between a disciple and his rabbi when he says, “The understanding of μαθητής, disciple, was changing to encompass not only a learner but one who adhered to a great master...there is no reference in the literature to a rabbi calling his disciples ‘friends’...; therefore this is an unusual passage.” This further accents the humility displayed by Jesus toward his disciples through washing their feet. Summers, *Friendship*, 25, fn. 44.

⁸⁵⁷ Scholer, ed. *Social Distinctives*, 105–6.

⁸⁵⁸ So Segovia, *Love*, 114–16, 119–21, 190. Even though ϖ⁶⁶ has the variant ὡς in 15:12, the function of either adverb is the same—comparative.

⁸⁵⁹ Tolmie notes that foot-washing was typically performed by slaves. Tolmie, *Farewell*, 194.

⁸⁶⁰ So Moloney, *Love*, 117–18.

⁸⁶¹ Bennema, *Power*, 224.

And Van der Watt declares that 15:13 “defines the apex of *love*” (italics original).⁸⁶² Peter understood Jesus’ expectation of love unto death because John depicts Peter using the verb *τιθῆμι* (13:37) to express his devotion to Jesus unto death, a devotion that Jesus questions in stating that Peter will deny him (v. 38). Although Peter failed under pressure during Jesus’ trial, he would receive another opportunity to prove his love to and to give his life for Jesus (21:18–19).

In sum, in 15:12–17, John presents friendship as a relationship between a superior and an inferior. Willett rightly observes that, “Friendship with Jesus is not a status automatically conferred but a response to the revelation of God in Jesus by living out his commandment to love.”⁸⁶³ The repeated commandment to love other disciples (vv. 12, 17) is a restatement of the same expectation expressed in 13:34 and a reminder that this kind of sacrificial love should characterize the community of those who claim the title friend-disciple of Jesus.⁸⁶⁴ Koester summarizes this expectation of self-sacrificial love, noting the hierarchical nature of the friendship in the following:

[Disciples] adopted a Christological understanding of friendship through which Jesus’ commands to love one another could be brought to expression. Friendship with Jesus was not egalitarian—he retained a singular position—yet it brought Jesus’ followers into a relationship of reciprocal love, creating a community in which people who addressed each other as ‘friends’ could realize the ideal mutual self-sacrifice (15:12–14).⁸⁶⁵

Fulfillment of the command to love affects one’s success in the mission of Jesus, for John links the two in 13:35 and states: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

4.6.2.3 *Royal Friendship and Election Imagery*

Third, the royal friendship interpretation is further evidenced in 15:12–17 in that the passage employs the language of election, which portrays Jesus as a royal figure who has the prerogative to choose his friends. John had previously remarked on Jesus’

⁸⁶² Van der Watt, ““Laying Down Your Life,”” 483.

⁸⁶³ Willett, *Wisdom*, 109.

⁸⁶⁴ For comparison of the love commandment in 13:34 with 15:12, 17, see Segovia, *Love*, 122–24.

choosing of his disciples in 13:18: “I know whom I have chosen.” In 15:19, Jesus distinguishes his disciples from the world because he chose them out of the world, which alludes to the reference of those who belong to Jesus and who are “his own” (ἴδιοι) in 13:1. In 15:16, Jesus also affirms his election of his disciples when he states: “You did not choose me, but I chose you” (οὐχ ὑμεῖς με ἐξελέξασθε, ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ ἐξελεξάμην ὑμᾶς). The emphasis in 15:16 on Jesus’ absolute right to choose his disciples is evident (1) in the emphatic position of οὐχ ὑμεῖς⁸⁶⁶ with the contrastive ἀλλά,⁸⁶⁷ (2) in the emphatic personal pronoun ἐγὼ that is followed by the verb ἐξελεξάμην, and (3) in the repetition of the personal pronoun (ὑμεῖς and ὑμᾶς), which focuses on the disciples and thereby stresses Jesus’ authority to choose whomever he wills.⁸⁶⁸

Chennattu interprets the election terminology through the OT covenant motif (e.g., Deut 7:6–11).⁸⁶⁹ She argues that the notions of God’s love and promises, and man’s commitment to God through obedience are parallel themes in the election of Israel and in John 15:16. Chennattu correctly points out these similarities between the OT and John 15, yet the absence of covenant terminology (i.e., διαθήκη, תְּבָרִית) weakens Chennattu’s proposal. Instead, I suggest that Jesus’ choice to elect certain individuals to be his friends is reminiscent of a monarch’s right to establish his circle of friends.⁸⁷⁰ Schnackenburg notes that election alongside friendship is a distinctly Christian concept and that it has to be interpreted as expressing a special relationship between Jesus and his followers within the paradigm of discipleship.⁸⁷¹ The special relationship is evident not only in the benefits the disciples receive (e.g., joy, love,

⁸⁶⁵ Koester, *Symbolism*, 241.

⁸⁶⁶ There are a total of six uses of the second personal pronoun ὑμεῖς in verse 16, stressing the division between Jesus’ function in election and his *right* to commission his disciples.

⁸⁶⁷ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 322, 671–72.

⁸⁶⁸ Klink, *John*, 658.

⁸⁶⁹ Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 59–61, 116–18.

⁸⁷⁰ See examples from the analysis of the Maccabean Literature in §4.4.4. *Pace* Brodie who contends that “Jesus does not address them [disciples] as an exclusive club. Rather they are...[to bring] their friendship with Jesus to others.” In my view, the concept of the privilege of being a friend of a king and being commissioned by the king are not mutually exclusive since a disciple can enjoy a unique relationship with king Jesus and fulfill the mission of inviting others into such a relationship (15:16). Brodie, *John*, 484.

frank speech from Jesus, 15:11, 15, 16), but also in the fact that it (special relationship) also demands obedience to the king's commission to participate in his mission.⁸⁷² Segovia observes that the conjunction ἵνα (ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑπάγητε καὶ καρπὸν φέρετε καὶ ὁ καρπὸς ὑμῶν μένῃ) introduces a purpose clause that lists three elements that are expected from Jesus' friends on a continuous basis (note the present tense of each verb)—so that you would go (ὑπάγητε), so that you would bear fruit (καρπὸν φέρετε), and so that your fruit would remain (ὁ καρπὸς ὑμῶν μένῃ).⁸⁷³

The charge to bear fruit is naturally intertwined with the theme of discipleship.⁸⁷⁴ John indicates that friendship cannot be separated from fulfilling Jesus' mission to bear fruit, which is accomplished by abiding in the vine and in the reciprocal love between the disciples, a love that is rooted in Jesus' love for his disciples (15:1–9). The result of obeying Jesus' command manifests itself in answered requests (15:7),⁸⁷⁵ which links friendship to discipleship, because the same promise of answered requests is seen in 14:12–14 where it is linked to belief and to bearing fruit in 15:7–8 where fruit-bearing confirms one's status as a disciple of Jesus (see also 16:23–24).

4.6.2.4 Royal Friendship and its Benefits

Fourth, 15:12–17 further reveals an overtone of a royal friendship because the passage lists benefits that the disciples are to experience in return for fulfilling the obligations Jesus taught them. The broader context indicates that the disciples experience abiding fruit that glorifies the Father and confirms them as authentic disciples (15:8); sacrificial love from their royal patron (15:9, 12); complete joy (15:11); knowledge of the Father (15:15); access to the Father (15:7, 16); answered requests from the Father (15:7, 16); and the new title of “friends” (15:14–15). Summers argues against the idea of royal friendship in 15:12–17 because according

⁸⁷¹ Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:111.

⁸⁷² Haenchen et al., *John*, 2:132.

⁸⁷³ Segovia, *Farewell*, 160.

⁸⁷⁴ Bennema, *Power*, 245–46, fn. 137.

⁸⁷⁵ Note the result clause, ἵνα ὃ τι αἰτήσητε τὸν πατέρα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου δῶ ὑμῖν. Segovia, *Farewell*, 161.

to Summers, Jesus is not in a position to provide benefits, and the disciples do not experience any material benefits (e.g., influence, financial gain, protection from enemies) from their friendship with Jesus.⁸⁷⁶ Summers, however, overlooks the greater point behind the Johannine royal motif that is noted in 18:36, “My kingdom is not from this world.” The benefits conferred on Jesus’ friends are not restricted to physical benefits since Jesus’ kingdom is not from this world. Thus, for Summers to expect immediate tangible benefits from the new royal friendship between Jesus and his disciples is to miss the greater theme of the entire Gospel that features relational (e.g., life that is abundant and eternal, 10:10, 28; 20:31) rather than physical benefits.

4.6.2.5 Summary

The exegesis of 15:12–17 supports the proposal that John portrays Jesus as establishing royal friendship with his disciples. The use of *ταῦτα λελάληκα* (v. 11) and the parallel clause *ταῦτα ἐντέλλομαι* (v. 17) along with the repeated command “to love one another” (vv. 12, 17) sets apart 15:12–17 as a separate unit within the FD. In 15:12–17, the royal friendship motif is first buttressed through the verb *τίθημι* that links 15:12–17 with 10:1–18 and suggests that John features Jesus as the shepherd-king. Second, Jesus’ commands to his disciples signal relational subordination which would be typical of royal friendship. Third, the imagery of election and commissioning similarly confirms Jesus as a monarch with the prerogative to select his friends. Fourth, the obligations stipulated and the benefits promised in 15:12–17 and in the surrounding context substantiate royal friendship as a viable interpretation of this passage.

4.7 Royal Friendship and Discipleship

There is a discernible link between friendship and discipleship in GJohn. Bennema suggests three links between the two concepts.⁸⁷⁷ First, friendship is associated with serving as witnesses for Jesus; thus, as John the Baptist functioned as a witness and a friend to Jesus, so the disciples filled a similar role (3:26–29; 15:13–16, 27). Second,

⁸⁷⁶ Summers, *Friendship*, 18.

love is inherent to both of these concepts—friendship and discipleship (13:34–35; 14:15:13–14). Third, discipleship and friendship are characterized by obedience, knowledge, and intimacy (8:31–32; 15:9, 13–16; 16:25–29; 17:6–26). Additionally, I observe that fruit-bearing through participation in Jesus’ mission (15:8, 16; 17:18; 20:21), answered requests (15:7, 16; 16:23–24), and election (6:70; 13:18; 15:16, 19) are themes that John associates with friendship and discipleship.⁸⁷⁸

Regarding the argument of this thesis—that John deploys friendship as a compensatory benefit conferred on the committed disciples—my observations in §3.3.4 concerning John’s exhortation to continuous belief and John’s narration of the disciples’ response can be applied to our treatment of friendship, because both abiding and friendship are part of the FD. In addition to the observations in §3.3.4, I note that the warning concerning hatred from the world in 15:18–27 appears in the near context of the promise of the royal friendship. In encouraging his disciples to endure opposition from the world, Jesus reminds them that he endured it before them (15:18, 20, 25), that opposition confirms the disciples’ separation from the world by his election (15:19), and that enduring opposition signifies that they know the Father (15:21–24). Subsequently in 16:33, Jesus commands his disciples to be of good cheer because he overcame the world that opposes them. Additionally, in order to keep the disciples from defection during difficult times (16:1)—that is, to prepare the disciples for hostility—Jesus warns them of potential persecution in the form of expulsion from the synagogues and death (16:1–2). In light of the looming threat of the world’s hatred, murder, and expulsion from the synagogues, John portrays Jesus as promising to change the status of his loyal followers to royal friends. This benefit is conferred on those who manifest continuous allegiance to him amidst opposition from the world.

⁸⁷⁷ Bennema, *Power*, 223–25.

⁸⁷⁸ Because the corollary benefits of royal friendship overlap with the corollary benefits of abiding and membership in the divine family, I treat them in §2.2.2.2. and §3.3.3.2.

4.8 Summary

In this chapter, I argued that in 15:12–17 John portrays Jesus as a royal figure who transforms his relationship with his disciples from being servants to being his friends. Jesus is depicted as a royal patron who initiates his disciples into his inner circle of friends, which forges a hierarchical relationship between Jesus and his disciples that promises privileges to the disciples in return for their loyalty to Jesus.⁸⁷⁹ Following a linguistic study of φίλος/φιλέω, I argued that (1) the references to the political friendships in the classical Greek, Romans, and Hellenistic sources, (2) John’s presentation of Jesus as a monarch in 1:48–49; 3:3–5; 6:14–15; 12:13–15; 18:33–19:21, and (3) the exegesis of 15:12–17 support royal friendship as a plausible interpretation of 15:12–17. John presents Jesus as the “King of Israel” who refuses public coronation as Israel’s king (6:14–15) until the hour of his glorification (12:23). It is in the conversation with Pilate that Jesus affirms that his kingdom is not of this earth (18:36–37). This confession is further substantiated by the Johannine narration of Jesus’ self-assertion of being the good shepherd, a metaphor that evokes imagery of monarch-shepherds in the OT, in the Roman Empire, and in Egyptian texts. John deploys this concept of royal friendship as a compensatory benefit of continuous discipleship in light of the cost of following Jesus.⁸⁸⁰

⁸⁷⁹ Keener agrees that the best understanding is a type of friendship with a king. Keener, *John*, 1007.

⁸⁸⁰ In his exegesis of 15:1–17, Segovia similarly sees the prompt for this passage being the real and immediate possibility of the disciples faltering “in terms of belief, praxis, or both” and the disciples “being under the pressure from the world.” Segovia, *Farewell*, 166–67, 209.

CHAPTER 5: THE SETTING OF GJOHN

5.1 Introduction

In this thesis I argued that we can package the Johannine themes associated with discipleship under three primary categories of benefits as rewards for continuous devotion to Jesus—membership in the divine family, the abiding of the Father and the Son through the Spirit in the believer, and royal friendship with Jesus. The purpose of this chapter is to show that viewing these three benefits within a historical setting of hostility from “the Jews” and from the world toward believers in Jesus aids the reader to understand John’s emphasis on the benefits of discipleship. The Johannine allusions to tension may bolster my assertion that John promises compensatory benefits to the faithful followers of Jesus in light of the potential cost of discipleship.

John depicts the conflict between “the Jews”⁸⁸¹ and believers in Jesus through the expulsion passages (9:22; 12:42; 16:2) and in the references to the fear of “the Jews” (7:13; 9:22; 12:42; 19:38; 20:19).⁸⁸² Additionally, John presents the world in opposition to Jesus and his disciples in seventy-eight occurrences. In this chapter I am not arguing for a specific *Sitz im Leben* of the readers of GJohn. Also, I am not attempting to resolve the debate about the timing of ἀποσυνάγωγος, whether it is in the time of Jesus or in the time of John’s readers. Moreover, I am not asserting that the background of the conflict is the sole reason why John wrote his Gospel. Instead, my aim is to set a possible background for the Johannine benefits of discipleship. Since scholars disagree about the specific *Sitz im Leben*, I begin by reviewing the dominant proposals to the historical setting of GJohn. Subsequently, I examine the Johannine evidence for the hostility of “the Jews” and the opposition from the world against believers in Jesus. This antagonism to Jesus’ disciples functions as the canvas on which John spotlights the benefits of continuous commitment to Jesus.

⁸⁸¹ As noted in §1.7, the designation “the Jews” is adopted directly from GJohn and carries no anti-Semitic connotation.

⁸⁸² In 12:42, John mentions fear of the Pharisees instead of fear of “the Jews.”

5.2 Prominent Approaches to the Setting of GJohn

There are three dominant approaches for the reconstruction of the setting of GJohn. First, I consider Köstenberger's trauma theory of the destruction of the temple as the lens through which to understand GJohn. Second, I review Martyn's two-level reading of GJohn that is interconnected with the *Birkat ha-Minim*. Third, I analyze John Ashton's recent proposal that John sets Jesus in a supersessionist relationship to Moses. Ashton's thesis is a variation of Martyn's reading of GJohn, void of dependence on the *Birkat ha-Minim*. I conclude by proposing a plausible historic setting of opposition from the Jewish authorities toward the Johannine believers in Jesus in the late first century CE.

5.2.1 Köstenberger: Destruction of the Temple

Köstenberger has argued that the trauma associated with the destruction of the temple is one of the possible incentives for the writing of GJohn. He hopes that "a new (or at least renewed) paradigm will emerge in the study of John's Gospel in which the destruction of the temple will assume its rightful and very significant place in the background of its composition."⁸⁸³ He admits that he is not the first to put forward such a proposal,⁸⁸⁴ but he notes that, "rarely has this material been made subservient to the question of the likely occasion for writing the Fourth Gospel."⁸⁸⁵ Köstenberger reasons:

[T]he Fourth Gospel's emphasis on Jesus as the fulfillment of the symbolism surrounding various Jewish festivals and institutions—including the temple—can very plausibly be read against the backdrop of the then-recent destruction of the second temple as one possible

⁸⁸³ Köstenberger, "Destruction," 241.

⁸⁸⁴ Motyer suggests that the author of GJohn placed the trauma of the temple destruction in a culture where various Jewish sects defined their identity in reference to the temple. The elimination of the temple prompted these sects to seek individualism to make themselves known and John's Gospel was one such group "seeking to bring order into the social chaos." Motyer, *Father*, 103. For similar proposals, see W. D. Davies, "Reflections on Aspects of the Jewish Background of the Gospel of John," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 43–64, citing 56; J. A. Draper, "Temple, Tabernacle and Mystical Experience in John," *Neot* 31 no. 2 (1997): 263, 285; Kerr, *Temple*, 31–33, 371–76; Peter W. L. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City: New Testament Perspectives on Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 195, 198; Westcott, *John*, xxxviii.

⁸⁸⁵ Köstenberger, "Destruction," 241.

element occasioning its composition. If this sketch is essentially correct, at least in its general contours, John would have formulated his Christology at least in part in the context of the crisis of belief engendered by the destruction of the temple. The gospel could then be understood, at least in part, as an effort to respond to the religious vacuum which resulted from the temple's destruction by pointing, not to a temporary, but a permanent solution: Jesus' replacement of the temple in the religious experience of his people by himself.⁸⁸⁶

Köstenberger provides three reasons why the destruction of the temple should be considered in understanding the background of the composition of GJohn. First, Köstenberger follows the majority of scholars in taking the date of the Gospel to be post-destruction of the temple.⁸⁸⁷ The destruction was an indisputable event that occurred in a historical datum that was recent from the Johannine perspective. Therefore, in his view, the destruction of the temple must have "had at least some bearing on the way this Gospel was written."⁸⁸⁸ Second, the destruction of the temple shaped the Jewish residents in Palestine and in the Diaspora and thus must have influenced the writer of GJohn.⁸⁸⁹ Third, Köstenberger argues that John presents the temple as a provisional manifestation of God's presence, and the destruction of the temple provides the opportunity for the Messiah "to inaugurate a more permanent form of God's presence with his people."⁸⁹⁰ Köstenberger's observations bring prominence to the temple motif in GJohn, linking the temple motif with the event of the destruction of the temple and the christological purpose of GJohn,⁸⁹¹ especially since both passages refer to Jesus' resurrection (see 2:19–22; 20:1–31).⁸⁹²

The destruction of the temple was almost certainly a factor in reading GJohn (e.g., 2:19–22), but, as Köstenberger admits, this theory only partially explains the

⁸⁸⁶ Ibid., 215.

⁸⁸⁷ The generally accepted date of GJohn is 80–100 CE. See, Behm et al., *Introduction*, 175; Brown, *John*, lxxxvi; Keener, *John*, 142; Moloney, *John*, 2–6; Tellbe, *Christ-Believers*, 35; Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 272.

⁸⁸⁸ Köstenberger, "Destruction," 216.

⁸⁸⁹ Ibid., 216–21.

⁸⁹⁰ Ibid., 228.

⁸⁹¹ Ibid., 228–42.

⁸⁹² Stegemann links Jesus' death and resurrection with the temple destruction. Ekkehard W. Stegemann, "Zur Tempelreinigung im Johannesevangelium," in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte. Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Christian Macholz Erhard Blum, Rolf Rendtorff, Ekkehard Stegemann (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990), 511–12.

Gospel's background. It neglects passages that do not relate to the temple (e.g., 2:1–11; 5:1–47; 6:1–71; 12:12–50; chs. 18–19),⁸⁹³ which is perhaps the reason that this view has not obtained much traction in scholarship.⁸⁹⁴ My proposal of a general background of tension between “the Jews”/the world and the believers does not undermine Köstenberger's view, for the two can coexist.

5.2.2 Martyn: The *Birkat ha-Minim* and the Two-Level Reading

In 1968, J. Louis Martyn published the first edition of *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* that has shaped Johannine studies for nearly five decades.⁸⁹⁵ Martyn interpreted the story of the blind man in John 9 as a window into the experience of the Johannine community at the end of the first century CE.⁸⁹⁶ He argued that believers in Jesus were traumatized by the conflict with “the Jews,” a conflict that resulted in the expulsion of believers in Jesus from the synagogues, and he contended that this expulsion of believers in Jesus from the synagogues was rooted in the curse against the heretics, designated as the *Birkat ha-Minim*. Martyn read the Johannine “expulsion passages” not as reflecting the events of the historical Jesus, but rather as reflecting the experience of the Johannine community at the end of the first century CE.⁸⁹⁷ His work launched a hermeneutic for the study of GJohn that Bernier designates “community criticism,”⁸⁹⁸ which supposes that a proper understanding of the Gospel lies in a reconstruction of the community behind the Gospel. Although the majority of the Johannine scholars continue to support a variation of Martyn's

⁸⁹³ Köstenberger lists the following passages in support of his argument: 1:14, 51; 2:14–22; 4:19–24; 7:1–8:59; 9:38; 10:22–39; 11:48–52; 20:28. Köstenberger, “Destruction,” 230.

⁸⁹⁴ The dominant view is still the Johannine community hypothesis as discussed in any major commentary.

⁸⁹⁵ Martyn, *History*. Kysar has a succinct synthesis of the rise, influence, and the erosion of this hypothesis. Kysar, *Voyages*, 237–45.

⁸⁹⁶ Martyn is not the first to promote the dual reading of the text. Bultmann engaged in a similar approach when he posited one character against another to represent wider communities at odds with each other. Bultmann suggested that the struggle between the BD and Peter within GJohn reflects competition between the Hellenistic church and the Palestinian church. Bultmann, *John*, 484–85.

⁸⁹⁷ Martyn, *History*.

⁸⁹⁸ Jonathan Bernier, *Aposynagōgos and the Historical Jesus in John: Rethinking the Historicity of the Johannine Expulsion Passages*, BIS 122 (Boston: Brill, 2013), 4. For defense of Gospel communities, see Esler, “Community,” 235–48.

hypothesis,⁸⁹⁹ various objections have been raised with respect to his view.⁹⁰⁰ Below I examine two of Martyn's key observations—the *Birkat ha-Minim* and the two-level reading of GJohn—that led him to conclude that the setting of GJohn is conflict between the synagogue and Jewish Christians. While I disagree with Martyn's dual level reading of GJohn and his application of the *Birkat ha-Minim* to GJohn, I concur with his general conclusion that tension between “the Jews” and Jesus' disciples is the background that prompted the writing of GJohn.

5.2.2.1 The *Birkat ha-Minim* and GJohn

Martyn's connection of the *Birkat ha-Minim*⁹⁰¹ to GJohn continues to be a highly debated proposition despite occasional efforts to maintain this suggestion.⁹⁰²

⁸⁹⁹ Paul N. Anderson, *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus: Modern Foundations Reconsidered*, LNTS 321 (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 34, 65, 197; Ashton, *Origins*; Barrett, *John*, 361–62; Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, lxx–lxxv, lxxxv, 380; Bultmann, *John*, 239; Collins, *These Things*, 49–55; Davies, “Reflections on Aspects of the Jewish Background of the Gospel of John,” 51; Hays, *Gospels*, 303; Marius Heemstra, *The Fiscus Judaicus and the Parting of the Ways*, WUNT 2.277 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 159–89; Howard-Brook, *Children*, 20; John S. Kloppenborg, “Disaffiliation in Associations and the ‘Ἀποσυνάγωγος’ of John,” *TS* 61 no. 1 (2011): 1–16; Joel Marcus, “*Birkat ha-Minim* Revisited,” *NTS* 55 (2009): 523–51; Richey, *Roman*, 51–64. Bernier divides this movement into two traditions—(1) classic Martynian which holds to two-level reading of GJohn and affirms the link between the *Birkat ha-Minim* and the Johannine expulsion passages, and (2) Neo-Martynian which holds to a two-level reading but rejects the link between the expulsion passages and the *Birkat ha-Minim*. Bernier, *Aposynagōgos*, 11–13.

⁹⁰⁰ Meeks called the *Birkat ha-Minim* a “red herring in Johannine research.” Meeks, “Breaking Away,” 102. Robinson calls the thesis a “highly imaginative reconstruction of the history of the fourth gospel” and sees no “compelling reason to assign it a [decree to expel Christians from synagogues] to a situation that obtained only at the end of the first century.” Robinson, *Redating*, 273–74. Kysar changed from declaring that the *Birkat ha-Minim* theory “convincingly exhibits the fact that the Fourth Gospel was written in response to the expulsion of Jewish Christians from their synagogues and the condemnation of Christians as heretics.” Robert Kysar, “Community and Gospel: Vectors in Fourth Gospel Criticism,” *Int* 21 (1977): 363. Kysar now maintains that, “there was no formal and widespread ban against Christians participating in synagogue worship, and the division between the church and synagogue more likely occurred little by little on a local basis.” Kysar, *Voyages*, 240. For a critique of the sectarian and two-level reading of GJohn, see Hamid-Khani, *Revelation*, 174–208. For additional critiques of the *Birkat ha-Minim*, see Bauckham, ed. *Gospels*; Bernier, *Aposynagōgos*; Frey, “Diaspora,” 186; Douglas R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, SNTSMS 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 48–56; Edward W. Klink, *The Sheep of the Fold: The Audience and Origin of the Gospel of John*, SNTSMS 141 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Adele Reinhartz, *Befriending the Beloved Disciple: A Jewish Reading of the Gospel of John* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 37–53; Adele Reinhartz, “Incarnation and Covenant: The Fourth Gospel through the Lens of Trauma Theory,” *Int* 69 no. 1 (2015): 36–37.

⁹⁰¹ It was published in 1898 by Solomon Schechter and Israel Abrahams, “Genizah Specimens,” *JQR* 10 (1898): 654–61.

Heemstra recently attempted to defend Martyn's connection of the *Birkat ha-Minim* to GJohn along with Martyn's traditional dating of the *Birkat ha-Minim* in relation to GJohn (ca. 90–100 CE) by appealing to the *fiscus Judaicus*.⁹⁰³ This tax, Heemstra remarks, was introduced by Vespasian in 70 CE for the temple of *Jupiter Capitolinus* as a replacement for the Jewish temple tax.⁹⁰⁴ Since certain Jews began to evade this tax, Domitian and Nerva amplified their tax collection efforts by means of imprisonment and the confiscation of property.⁹⁰⁵ Heemstra suggests that in the course of this process certain apostate Jews and Jewish Christians were directed back to the synagogues by the Roman officials in order to be properly taxed. Then, in response to this situation with regard to the synagogues, argues Heemstra, the Jewish synagogue leaders implemented the *Birkat ha-Minim* in order to unify faithful Jews and expel the heretics. In this way, Heemstra forges a connection between the *Birkat ha-Minim* and *fiscus Judaicus*.

⁹⁰² The dating of the *Birkat ha-Minim* is evaluated by Gedalyahu Alon, "Jewish Christians: The Parting of the Ways," in *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age (70–640 CE)*, ed. Gershon Levi (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1980), 288–307; Ashton, *Origins*; Bernier, *Aposynagōgos*; Brown, "Other Sheep," 5–22; Brown et al., *Introduction*, 151–88; Carroll, "Fourth Gospel," 19–32; Maurice Casey, *Is John's Gospel True?* (London: Routledge, 1996), 98–110; Shaye J. D. Cohen, "The Significance of Yavneh: Pharisees, Rabbis and the End of Jewish Sectarianism," in *Hebrew Union College Annual* (1984), 27–53; Raimo Hakola, *Identity Matters: John, the Jews, and Jewishness*, NovTSup 118 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 45–55; Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 114–19; William Horbury, "Extirpation and Excommunication," *VT* 35 (1985): 13–38; S. T. Katz, "Issues in the Separation of Judaism and Christianity after 70 C.E.: A Reconsideration," *JBL* 103 (1984): 43–76; Keener, *John*, 207–14; Reuven Kimelman, "Birkat Ha-Minim and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, ed. E. P. Sanders, A. I. Baumgarten, and Alan Mendelson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 226–44; Edward W. Klink, "Expulsion from the Synagogue? Rethinking a Johannine Anachronism," *TynBul* 59 no. 1 (2008): 99–118; Kloppenborg, "Disaffiliation," Article #962, 16 pages; Celestino G. Lingad, *The Problems of Jewish Christians in the Johannine Community*, TGST 73 (Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2001), 66–109; Martyn, *History*, 37–62, 156–7; Motyer, *Father*, 92–94; John Painter, "John 9 and the Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel," *JSNT* 28 (1986): 31–61; Schrage, "ἀποσυνάγωγος," *TDNT*, 7:848–52; Hermann Leberecht Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 6 vols. (München: Beck, 1922), IV:293–333; G. M. Styler, "The Persecution of Christians in John 15:18–16:4a," in *Essays on John*, ed. Barnabas Lindars and C. M. Tuckett (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 48–69; Pieter Willem van der Horst, "The Birkhat ha-Minim in Recent Research," *ExpTim* 105 (1993/1994): 363–68; Urban C. Von Wahlde, "The Terms for Religious Authorities in the Fourth Gospel: A Key to Literary-Strata," *JBL* 98 no. 2 (1979): 231–53.

⁹⁰³ Heemstra, *Fiscus Judaicus*.

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 1–66.

Heemstra then links *fiscus Judaicus* with the Johannine term ἀποσυνάγωγος by proposing that this concept should be read in light of the OT passages that banned certain individuals from the congregation of Israel. Heemstra reasons, “If Jewish Christians were considered to be heretical in saying that ‘the Torah is not from Heaven,’ then they were expelled from ‘all Israel.’”⁹⁰⁶ Thus, the Johannine ἀποσυνάγωγος “should perhaps not so much stress the point of putting Jewish Christians out of the synagogue, but rather creating a formal (legal) distance between them and the Jewish community.”⁹⁰⁷ Consequently, after the year 96 CE, Jewish believers in Jesus could no longer claim the label “Jew” due to the legal action of ἀποσυνάγωγος.⁹⁰⁸

Following this, Heemstra turns to and explains John 16:2 as referring to two events—first, he suggests that the ἀποσυνάγωγος legally separated the Jewish believers in Jesus from the Jewish community, and second—which in his view resulted from the first—he suggests that the Romans began to view Jewish believers in Jesus as atheists who deserve death. Thus, he attributes the death of the disciples predicted in 16:2b to the Romans, not to “the Jews.”⁹⁰⁹ By linking ἀποσυνάγωγος to *fiscus Judaicus*, Heemstra concludes that 96 CE is the date for the “parting of the ways” between “the Jews” and the believers in Jesus. Additionally, he contends that GJohn should be dated to 100 CE in light of the events associated with the *Birkat ha-Minim* and *fiscus Judaicus*.⁹¹⁰

While Heemstra’s application of *fiscus Judaicus* to the question at hand is insightful because it further demonstrates the potential reality of the rift between Judaism and Jewish Christians as the background to GJohn, I have four critiques of Heemstra’s argument. First, he attributes the expulsion from the synagogues to the Jewish assertion that Christians denied the heavenly origin of the Torah because they claimed that the Messiah was from heaven.⁹¹¹ Heemstra cites m. Sanh. 10.1, which

⁹⁰⁶ Ibid., 179.

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid., 187.

⁹⁰⁹ Ibid., 186–89.

⁹¹⁰ Ibid., 187, 201–7.

⁹¹¹ Ibid., 179.

reads: “The following are those who do not have a portion in the world to come: the one who says there is no resurrection of the dead, (the one who says) the Torah is not from Heaven, and the ‘*apiqoros*.’”⁹¹² This contention, however, prompts two responses. First, the two views—the “Torah from Heaven” versus the “Messiah from Heaven”—are not mutually exclusive concepts; consequently, Heemstra’s point that the Christians believed that the Messiah was from heaven need not necessarily have generated a conflict with “the Jews.” Second, as Kloppenborg perceptively notes, we cannot, in fact, cite “any instances of Jewish Christian documents which deny the divine origin of the Torah.”⁹¹³ So the accusation itself may have served as part of the conflict between “the Jews” and the Christians, but the lack of historical evidence to validate the legitimacy of this alleged Christian theological error weakens Heemstra’s assertion that ἀποσυναγώγους was in response to this alleged Christian practice.

Second, Heemstra’s re-interpretation of ἀποσυνάγωγος to mean that the Jewish Christians were excluded from the Jewish community rather than merely from the synagogue is not incontrovertible. Fervently opposing such a view, Schiffman writes:

It cannot be overemphasized that while the benediction against the *minim* sought to exclude Jewish Christians from active participation in the synagogue service, it in no way implied expulsion from the Jewish people. In fact, heresy, no matter how great, was never seen as cutting the heretic’s tie to Judaism (*italics original*).⁹¹⁴

Thus, Heemstra’s point that *fiscus Judaicus* compelled “the Jews” to set boundaries for those who would be included in the Jewish community which resulted in the *Birkat ha-Minim* is not sustainable.

⁹¹² Ibid., 169.

⁹¹³ Kloppenborg, “Disaffiliation,” 3 fn. 14.

⁹¹⁴ Lawrence H. Schiffman, “At the Crossroads: Tannaitic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism,” in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, ed. E. P. Sanders, A. I. Baumgarten, and Alan Mendelson (London: SCM, 1981), 152. Schiffman argues that the *Birkat ha-Minim* sought to exclude heretics from serving as precentors in the synagogue. He affirms the *Birkat ha-Minim* as targeting Jewish Christians (*minim*) and Gentile Christians (*notzrim*) but because of the evidence from Justin Martyr, Origen, and Epiphanius, he dates the final version of the benediction to second century CE. He allows for the possibility that the Johannine expulsion passages were a result of the institution of this benediction. Ibid., 149–56.

Third, Heemstra identifies the starting point of the events that led to the final “parting of ways” much too late in history. He asserts that it was the initial levy of the *fiscus Judaicus* in 70 CE—and the subsequent harsh implementation of it by Domitian as well as Nerva’s revision of the tax application—along with the post 70 CE controversy “on the ‘Torah from Heaven’ *versus* ‘Messiah from Heaven’”⁹¹⁵ that led to the practice of expulsion. However, Hengel who similarly viewed the separation between the Second Temple Jews and Jewish Christians as a gradual process has convincingly shown that this separation began earlier than Heemstra is willing to admit. Hengel writes: “‘Expulsion’ of Christians from the synagogues took place, rather, in a lengthy and painful process which began even before Paul with the martyrdom of Stephen.”⁹¹⁶ Hengel adds that the *Birkat ha-Minim* should be viewed as “simply the ultimate consequence of a development full of combat and suffering,”⁹¹⁷ and that “this curse was not only directed against the Jewish Christians but against all Jewish ‘heresies.’”⁹¹⁸ Thus, Heemstra’s preference for 96 CE as the date of the separation between “the Jews” and the Jewish Christians overlooks other NT evidence that points to an early starting point for this conflict and ultimate divergence of paths.⁹¹⁹

My fourth critique of Heemstra involves his reading of John 16:2, specifically with respect to his inadequate explanation of the latter part of the verse: “There is coming an hour when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.” Heemstra applies this verse to the Roman persecution of Christians; however, while he relates 16:2b to the Roman charge that the Christians were atheists,⁹²⁰ he does not provide evidence of the Romans viewing their execution of Christians as an act of service to their gods.⁹²¹ In contrast to Heemstra’s understanding of 16:2b, reading the entire verse as a reference to Jewish antagonism toward Christians—illustrated in

⁹¹⁵ Heemstra, *Fiscus Judaicus*, 159–89, citing 186.

⁹¹⁶ Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 114–15.

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁹ See appendix B.

⁹²⁰ Heemstra, *Fiscus Judaicus*, 176.

⁹²¹ Heemstra cites Pliny’s letter to Trajan, *Ep.* 10.96 but it does not assert that their hostility toward believers in Jesus is rooted in the worship of Roman gods.

Paul's aggression toward believers in Jesus as he dragged them out of the synagogues and condemned them to death on account of his zeal for God (e.g., Acts 8:1–3; 9:1–2; 22:3–4; Gal 1:13–14)—is far more congruous with 16:2b.⁹²² In the end, while I disagree with certain details in Heemstra's reconstruction of the progression of the events, I agree with his affirmation of the background of tension between “the Jews” and Jewish believers in Jesus, which I suggest is one of the prompts for John's deployment of benefits for continuous discipleship.

Bernier has recently reassessed the *Birkat ha-Minim* with respect to the expulsion passages in GJohn and has suggested that the two phenomena ought not to be associated together. First, he observes that the *Birkat ha-Minim* edict does not mention expulsions and that the Johannine expulsion passages do not mention the edict; therefore, no explicit correlation can be identified between the two.⁹²³ Second, in his defense of the historicity of the practice of ἀποσυνάγωγος by means of examining the verb συντίθημι in John 9:22 in light of the two other occurrences of this verb in the NT (Luke 22:5; Acts 23:20), Bernier concludes that these two instances of συντίθημι imply an informal decision rather than a formal decree.⁹²⁴ Bernier also finds support for his conclusion of the informal meaning of συντίθημι in Josephus who uses the term about eighty times, half of which refer to official decrees and half to non-official decrees.⁹²⁵ Additionally, Bernier points out that in 12:42 it is the Pharisees who are behind the application of the ἀποσυνάγωγος not the rulers which implies that this was not a formal decree.⁹²⁶ Bernier supposes that the informal nature of this decree would have been executed through mob or police violence (e.g.,

⁹²² In 16:2, we can presume the antagonists of the disciples are “the Jews” since they are said to put Jesus' sympathizers out of synagogues elsewhere (9:22, 34; 12:42). If we look back to 15:18–25 as the context for 16:2b, it seems best to identify the antagonism of “the Jews” as representative of the world since in 15:25 Jesus cites the Jewish Scriptures to explain their antagonism toward him and the disciples. Similarly, Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 123 fn. 132; Thompson, *John*, 335–36; Tolmie, *Farewell*, 215.

⁹²³ Bernier, *Aposynagōgos*, 41, 45–46.

⁹²⁴ Bernier argues that the decision to pay Judas to betray Jesus (Luke 22:45) and the decision by “the Jews” to deceive the Roman centurion to bring out Paul so they might kill him (Acts 23:20) must not have come through formal legislation, rather by an ad hoc decision of the leaders. Thus, he reasons because ἀποσυνάγωγος is paired with συντίθημι in 9:22, it speaks to the informal nature of the decision. *Ibid.*, 68–74.

⁹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 70.

John 7:32; 9:34; Luke 4:29–30).⁹²⁷ Thus, Bernier understands the expulsions of Jesus' followers to be achieved by an informal rather than by an official decree and as occurring during the time of Jesus rather than being tied to the *Birkat ha-Minim* and reflecting the *Sitz im Leben* of the Johannine community.⁹²⁸

Bernier's conclusion that ἀποσυνάγωγος in GJohn was not an official decree compelled him to postulate a new suggestion for the rationale and the process behind the practice of ἀποσυνάγωγος. He argues, in effect, that the fascination with Jesus as the possible Messiah prompted the Jewish leaders to curb support for Jesus through the expulsion of Christians from the synagogue, which at times resulted in physical violence.⁹²⁹ Bernier reasons that Jesus' popularity challenged the religious status quo in Jerusalem since people were attracted to Jesus (John 11:48; 12:11, 19). Popular support of Jesus threatened the influence of the Jewish authorities, and thus they responded by attempting to terminate the Jesus movement (11:48–50). Bernier posits that when that failed, the Jewish leaders orchestrated the death of Jesus and continued similar hostility against Jesus' followers (Acts 8:1–3; 9:1–2).⁹³⁰ John's account of the hostility toward Jesus and his followers coincides with the evidence from SG and Acts, where in both writings we read of Jesus' sympathizers being forced out of the synagogues.⁹³¹

5.2.2.2 The Two-level Reading and GJohn

Martyn's argument rests not only on the *Birkat ha-Minim* but also on his two-level reading of GJohn. Martyn applied the two-level reading strategy to John 9, viewing the Gospel as both a story of Jesus and the story of the community through the blind

⁹²⁶ Ibid.

⁹²⁷ Ibid., 73–74.

⁹²⁸ Ibid., 68–74.

⁹²⁹ Cf. Hare and Kloppenborg who argue that social misbehavior was the impetus for ἀποσυνάγωγος. Chennattu rightly points to the confession of Jesus as Messiah as the cause for the conflict between "the Jews" and the disciples. However, I think she reads too much into GJohn when she concludes that John's response to the expulsion passages is to take the OT covenant metaphor and redefine it, broaden it, and apply it to the relationship between God and the Johannine community. Rather, I argue that John picks up on certain OT themes in his explanation of Jesus' identity but in reference to the disciples, John deploys a variety of images to stimulate continuous discipleship. Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 194–211; Hare, *Persecution*, 48–56; Kloppenborg, "Disaffiliation," 1–16.

⁹³⁰ Bernier, *Aposynagōgos*, 68–76; 102–6.

man's experience with "the Jews." Even though many scholars have accepted Martyn's reading of John 9,⁹³² Reinhartz objects that the method cannot be applied to other passages.⁹³³ For example, Martha and Mary would need to represent Johannine Christians who were expelled from the Jewish community, but in 11:19 they are still surrounded by Jewish mourners.⁹³⁴ Additionally, Reinhartz applies narrative and redaction criticism to John 11:1–42 and 12:11 and demonstrates that certain individuals openly believed in Jesus and yet they suffered no repercussions from "the Jews."⁹³⁵ Thus, according to Reinhartz, while these passages should confirm the two-level reading of GJohn, instead they undermine this theory.⁹³⁶ For Reinhartz, the two-level reading of GJohn is circular for it reads the text as a reflection of the Johannine community and then proceeds to use that history to account for the details in the Gospel.⁹³⁷ In contrast to the two-level reading approach, Reinhartz asserts that John intended to write a historical account of the time of Jesus.⁹³⁸ In defense of this, Reinhartz points to John's references to fulfilled prophecy (e.g., 12:12–16; 18:32; 19:24, 32–37) and John's claims of writing a truthful account of his observations (19:35; 21:24–25) as evidence that "the earliest readers may have viewed the Gospel

⁹³¹ This will be treated below.

⁹³² See footnote 899 and as noted by Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 40.

⁹³³ Adele Reinhartz, "Reading History in the Fourth Gospel," in *What we have Heard from the Beginning: The Past, Present, and Future of Johannine Studies*, ed. Tom Thatcher (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 193.

⁹³⁴ Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 41.

⁹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 37–53.

⁹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 39–48.

⁹³⁷ Adele Reinhartz, "Women in the Johannine Community: An Exercise in Historical Imagination," in *A Feminist Companion to John*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 17.

⁹³⁸ Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 49–50. For defense of οὐτός...οἶδαμεν...αὐτὸν οἶμαι referring to a single eyewitness in 21:24–25 (see also 19:35) which would suggest a high probability of historical accuracy of the Johannine narrative, see Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 358–411; Jackson, "Ancient," 1–34. For defense of multiple authors in 21:24–25 and thus reduced historicity in GJohn, see R. Alan Culpepper, "John 21:24–25: The Johannine Sphragis," in *John, Jesus, and History: Aspects of Historicity in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2007), 349–64; Andrew T. Lincoln, "The Beloved Disciple as Eyewitness and the Fourth Gospel as Witness," *JSNT* 85 (2002): 11. For broader discussions concerning the historicity of GJohn, see Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher, *John, Jesus, and History*, 3 vols. (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2007–2016).

primarily as historical and cosmological tales rather than an ecclesiological tale, the story of their community, as such.”⁹³⁹

Bernier similarly rejects the two-level reading approach and places the expulsion passages in the time of Jesus. Bernier analyzed the passages that present the writer as an eyewitness who conveyed a truthful account of the events he narrated (e.g., 1:14; 2:18–22; 19:35; 21:24–25) as he relied on his memory with the aid of the Paraclete (14:26) in his aim to prompt belief through the Gospel (19:35; 20:30–31). Bernier concluded that John was knowledgeable about the life of Jesus, that he wrote the Gospel with the intent to include factuality, and that he was plausibly knowledgeable on the issues he narrated, while being free of the suspicion to commit fraud.⁹⁴⁰ Therefore, according to Bernier, the events recounting the life of Jesus generally and the expulsion from synagogues specifically are historically plausible.⁹⁴¹ While Reinhartz and Bernier both reject Martyn’s reading of GJohn, they affirm that the expulsion passages not only reflect the events that were occurring in the time of Jesus (9:22; 12:42), but that also such events extended into the time of the readers of GJohn (16:2).⁹⁴² It is not my intent to determine the timing of the expulsions from the synagogues but only to indicate that while rejecting the link between the *Birkat ha-Minim* and ἀποσυνάγωγος, certain scholars still hold to the concept of a conflict behind GJohn.

5.2.3 Ashton: Jesus Replaces Moses

Ashton has recently advanced Martyn’s thesis of the conflict between the synagogue and the Jewish Christians by arguing that “around the end of the first century CE, the opposition between Moses and Jesus was at the heart of the conflict between these

⁹³⁹ Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 50.

⁹⁴⁰ Bernier, *Aposynagōgos*, 24. Bernier derives his methodology from Ben F. Meyer, “Locating Lonerganian Hermeneutics,” in *Critical Realism and the New Testament*, ed. Ben F. Meyer (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 1989), 1–16; Ben F. Meyer, “Lonergan’s Breakthrough and the Aims of Jesus,” in *Critical Realism and the New Testament*, ed. Ben F. Meyer (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 1989), 147–56.

⁹⁴¹ Bernier, *Aposynagōgos*, 114–34.

⁹⁴² Ibid., 132–34; Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 50–53. See also Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 119; Klink, “Expulsion,” 117–18; Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 240.

two groups.”⁹⁴³ Ashton noted the passages that in his view set Jesus in opposition to Moses (e.g., 1:14–17; 1:19–2:11; 4:1–42; 3:14; 5:31–47; 6:30–33; 7:15–24; 9:27–28) and concluded that, “The Gospel represents a deliberate decision to supplant Moses and to replace him with Jesus, thereby substituting one revelation, and indeed one religion, for another.”⁹⁴⁴ He explains: “[The] ousting of Moses from his central place as God’s representative in his dealings with his people, the fourth evangelist (along with those on whose behalf he spoke and wrote) was effectively establishing a new religion.”⁹⁴⁵

Ashton devotes a chapter to presenting Jesus as the prophet and in this chapter he points to four “family quarrels”—ancestry, sacred space, festivals/feasts, and the law—that he contends function as assaults on the Jewish religion in GJohn.⁹⁴⁶ The attack on ancestry is evident by Jesus being depicted as greater than Jacob (1:51; 4:12) and Abraham (8:53). Next, Jesus supersedes the temple (2:19) and declares Jerusalem to be less central to Jewish worship (4:21, 23), which Ashton suggests seems to abolish the sacred space of Judaism. The festivals/feasts are nullified, since, in his view, Jesus is presented as embodying Sukkot (7:37), as applying the consecration of Hanukkah to himself (10:36), and as being the true paschal lamb of Passover (19:36). Finally, Jesus declares to be the focus of the Law (5:39) and the Writings (5:46) and is presented as a mediator of revelation who is superior to Moses (1:17), on account of which the primacy of Moses is undermined. Specifically, in reference to John 1:17—“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”—Ashton writes, “With this sentence, Moses has been ousted from his position at the heart of the Jewish religion; his privileged role as God’s intermediary has been taken away from him and conferred

⁹⁴³ Ashton, *Origins*, 9. For a discussion on when the final break between Judaism and Christianity occurred, see the following works: for the break before 70 CE, Giorgio Jossa, *Jews or Christians?: The Followers of Jesus in Search of Their Own Identity*, WUNT 202 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 102–21. For the break ca. 96 CE, Heemstra, *Fiscus Judaicus*, 165, 201–3. For the break ca. 135 CE, James D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM, 2006), 312–18.

⁹⁴⁴ Ashton, *Origins*, 3.

⁹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 142–44.

instead on Christ.”⁹⁴⁷ From Ashton’s perspective, these four “family quarrels” convey the replacement of Moses with Jesus, which, he suggests, is the basis for the Jewish antagonism toward the Johannine community.⁹⁴⁸

While the juxtaposition of Moses and Jesus in GJohn has been examined prior to Ashton,⁹⁴⁹ Ashton explains the environment of conflict that undergirds the Johannine narrative as reflected in the ἀποσυνάγωγος passages, by pointing to the replacement of Moses with Jesus. Ashton identifies John 9:27–28 as the most important passage for his assertion that Jesus usurps the place of Moses.⁹⁵⁰ However, I suggest that in this passage it is “the Jews” who see Jesus in opposition to Moses, not the author of GJohn; in contrast, the author views Jesus as the successor to Moses, that is, as one who maintains and perpetuates Moses’ role, not as one who usurps and abolishes his role. Admittedly, the Jewish perception of Jesus’ usurpation is seen in the narrative by John’s presentation of the pronounced Jewish allegiance to Moses over Jesus. First, the Jewish leaders assert, “We are disciples of Moses” (note the emphatic position of ἡμεῖς, 9:28). Second, the parallel placement of the pronouns σὺ and ἡμεῖς in verse 28 (i.e., σὺ μαθητῆς εἶ ἐκείνου with ἡμεῖς δὲ τοῦ Μωϋσέως ἐσμὲν μαθηταί) heightens the contrast between the depicted loyalty of the Jewish leaders to Moses and the supposed disloyalty of the blind man to Moses.⁹⁵¹ Third, the additional use of ἡμεῖς at the beginning of verse 29 (ἡμεῖς οἴδαμεν) further reinforces the contrast between associating with Jesus and associating oneself with Jesus as over against associating oneself with Moses.⁹⁵² Finally, the use of the pronoun ἐκείνου in verse 28 by the Pharisees (σὺ μαθητῆς εἶ ἐκείνου), instead of the personal name Jesus, also exhibits the tension between the Pharisees and Jesus. In this way, John depicts *the Jewish leaders* as viewing Jesus and Moses as competing figures. But even though “the Jews” are depicted as viewing themselves as the disciples of

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid., 167.

⁹⁴⁸ Ibid., 9, 22, 142–43.

⁹⁴⁹ Meeks, *Prophet-King*, NovTSup; Harstine, *Moses*, 40–75.

⁹⁵⁰ Ashton, *Origins*, 17–18, 93–94, 141.

⁹⁵¹ This emphatic use of the pronoun σὺ is also seen in 9:17 (τί σὺ λέγεις περὶ αὐτοῦ) where the blind man is set against the Pharisees (λέγουσιν οὖν τῷ τυφλῷ πάλιν) with the dual use of the verb λέγω. Barrett, *John*, 360.

⁹⁵² Keener, *John*, 791.

Moses and label the blind man as a disciple of “that man,” there is no indication in their polemical discourse that they view Jesus as the replacement of Moses (9:24–31). Thus, instead of viewing Jesus as one who supplants Moses, I propose that John depicts Jesus to be in concert with Moses in John 9 as well as in the rest of GJohn; that is, John does not view Jesus and Moses to be in opposition.

Additionally, Ashton’s reading does not represent John’s broader depiction of Jesus and Moses. That is, on account of John’s previous allusion to Moses in 5:45–47, it is more accurate to conclude that Moses and Jesus are not in conflict with each other, but that they are, rather, concomitant figures in the view of GJohn. This complementary nature of Moses and Jesus can be seen in 5:45–47:

Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father, the one accusing you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. If you believed (ἐπιστεύετε, imperfect) Moses, you would believe (ἐπιστεύετε, imperfect) me, because he wrote concerning me. But if his writings you do not believe (πιστεύετε, present), how will you believe (πιστεύσετε, future) my words.

The four instances of πιστεύω in this passage stress that belief in Moses should mature into belief in Jesus (note the tense changes in πιστεύω from imperfect to present to future). In effect, the two figures are not presented as being in conflict with each other; rather, Jesus is depicted as continuing the message of Moses.⁹⁵³ The declaration that Moses will accuse those who reject Jesus is the strongest indication that Jesus and Moses had a similar mission. According to John, the Jewish leaders erroneously set the authority of Moses against the authority of Jesus (9:28–29), and in so doing they misunderstood the role of Moses, who is depicted by John as a witness to Jesus rather than as an antagonist to Jesus (1:45; 5:45–47).⁹⁵⁴ Thus, in contrast to Ashton’s assertion that Jesus ousts Moses, it seems preferable to argue

⁹⁵³ In his critique of Ashton, Bennema says, “While agreeing with Ashton’s main point that the fourth evangelist presents Jesus as superseding Moses, I see this more in terms of Jesus going *beyond* Moses rather than *against* Moses.” I independently came to the same conclusion based on John 5:45–47. Cornelis Bennema, review of “*The Gospel of John and Christian Origins*,” *JETS* 58 no. 2 (June 2015): 398.

⁹⁵⁴ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 158. John 5:45–47 supports the notion that true belief in Moses will lead to belief in Jesus. The perfect tense of ἠλπίκατε in 5:45 may accent the long-standing commitment of “the Jews” to Moses even when faced with a type of “new Moses” (see 6:14; 7:40). See also Meeks

that John does not place Jesus *against* Moses as much as John presents Jesus as the figure who continues Moses' role (1:41, 45; 5:46).

Ashton defends his position by appealing to Martyn's two-level drama hypothesis with respect to John 9.⁹⁵⁵ Because Ashton affirms only one messianic confession during the time of Jesus, that is, Peter's declaration in Matt 16:16, he claims that there is no compelling evidence for a christological conflict between Jesus/disciples and the Pharisees/"the Jews" until John 9, which he contends takes place at the time of the Johannine community. Ashton quotes Martyn in his defense as follows:

This statement [John 9:28] is scarcely conceivable in Jesus' lifetime, since it recognizes discipleship to Jesus not only as antithetical, but also as somehow comparable, to discipleship to Moses. It is, on the other hand, easily understood under circumstances in which the synagogue has begun to view the Christian movement as an essential and more or less clearly distinguishable rival.⁹⁵⁶

With reliance on Martyn, Ashton declares that a few dozen followers of Jesus would not pose a challenge to the established Jewish religion; thus, the accusation against the blind man in 9:28 is, in his view, inconceivable during Jesus' lifetime.⁹⁵⁷

Moreover, Ashton explains the narrative concerning the conflict between Jesus and "the Jews" as a later interpolation into the story of Jesus. Ashton maintains that when John "implicates the Pharisees, along with the chief priests, in the two attempts on Jesus' life—first in the earlier episode in the temple (7:32, 45) and then in the final, successful, effort (11:47, 57; 18:3)—he is probably retrojecting his current enmity with the Pharisees back into the story."⁹⁵⁸ However, in the SG, although there is no additional instance of a christological confession *per se* by a specific individual (see Matt 16:16=Mark 8:29), the animosity of the high priest, chief priests, scribes, and elders toward Jesus that led to his crucifixion is still to be traced to Jesus' claims of

who writes, "Moses only wrote of Jesus and true belief in Moses led to belief in Jesus." Meeks, *Prophet-King*, NovTSup, 319.

⁹⁵⁵ Ashton, *Origins*, 76–78.

⁹⁵⁶ Cited by *ibid.*, 77. Original from Martyn, *History*, 47.

⁹⁵⁷ Ashton writes: "There is not the slightest indication that there was any controversy over this title [Christ] between Jesus and the Pharisees, or between Jesus and any other Jewish group. Indeed it is safe to say that such a controversy is highly unlikely to have occurred in Jesus' lifetime." Ashton, *Origins*, 77–78.

his messianic status (Matt 26:57–68=Mark 14:53–64=Luke 22:66–23:5). Thus, for Ashton to defend Martyn on account of allegedly only one messianic confession recorded in the SG (i.e., Matt 16:16) is to overlook the broader evidence of Jesus’ messianic claims that lead to a conflict between Jesus and “the Jews.”

In the end, the timing of the expulsions from the synagogues—in the time of Jesus or Johannine community—does not undermine my argument that the religious milieu of GJohn is conflict. While I disagree with Ashton’s rationale for the conflict (i.e., Jesus supplants Moses), Ashton and I agree that the setting of conflict is the historical background of GJohn. This prompts me to suggest that reading John’s benefits against such a setting further reinforces John’s challenge to continuous discipleship in order to experience membership in the divine family, abiding with the Father and the Son, and friendship with Jesus.

5.3 Hostility in GJohn

The aim of this section is to demonstrate that GJohn should be understood against the background of opposition.⁹⁵⁹ From the outset, John sets his narrative in a framework of conflict. In 1:11 John writes, “He came to his own and his own did not receive him” (note the empathic placement of τὰ ἴδια and its repetition as οἱ ἴδιοι that adds further emphasis).⁹⁶⁰ Although there is no explicit mention of opposition to Jesus in this verse, the reader is made aware that Jesus will experience rejection, and this proves true as the Johannine narrative develops, ultimately climaxing in Jesus’ crucifixion. This opposition, however, does not cease with Jesus’ crucifixion, but is subsequently directed at his disciples (e.g., 16:1–2; 20:19). John presents two groups of antagonists who exhibit hostility toward the Father, Jesus, the Spirit, and the disciples: the world and “the Jews.”

⁹⁵⁸ Ibid., 51.

⁹⁵⁹ John’s references to hostility toward Jesus and Jesus’ followers is congruent with the religious milieu of early Christianity presented by the other NT writings. See appendix B.

⁹⁶⁰ John repeats the phrase “his own” in 10:3–4, 12; 13:1; 15:19 to distinguish between Jesus’ followers and those who reject him.

5.3.1 The World in GJohn

John projects a complex portrayal of the world through the seventy-eight appearances of κόσμος (the world). On the one hand, John presents the world from a positive vantage point. God loves the world (3:16–17) that was created by Jesus (1:10), and Jesus desires that the world may be saved (17:21). God sent Jesus to save the world (3:16–17; 4:42; 6:33, 51; 12:47), and Jesus came into the world (1:9; 3:19; 6:14; 10:36; 11:27; 18:37) to remove its sin (1:29). Thus, John presents the world as a mission field for Jesus that is in need of salvation (8:26; 14:31; 16:28; 17:18, 21, 23; 18:20, 37; 21:25). On the other hand, despite the various passages that present the world with a positive or neutral connotation (7:4; 11:9; 12:19, 25; 16:21; 17:5, 13, 24; 18:20; 21:25), John also characterizes the world to be in enmity with God, Jesus, the Paraclete/Spirit, and believers. The world is, as Hays says, “the theater of the incarnation of the Word...[it is portrayed] mostly as a site of unbelief and hostility to Jesus and his followers.”⁹⁶¹ My focus below is to observe how John presents the world as an antagonist to God, Jesus, Jesus’ followers, and the Paraclete/Spirit.

First, John describes the world as a place that is hostile to God (15:21–24; 17:25) and has rejected Jesus (3:19). The world is characterized by sin (1:29; 16:8), darkness (8:12; 9:5; 12:46), false peace (14:27), hatred toward God, Jesus, and the disciples (7:7; 15:18–19; 16:33; 17:14), and the world is under the power of the ruler of the world (12:31; 14:30; 16:11). The world does not know Jesus (1:10) or God (17:25), rejects the Spirit (14:17), and rejoices at Jesus’ death (16:20). Jesus, however, does not belong to the world, and Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world (18:36). Jesus came to judge the world (9:39; 12:31), and to overcome it (16:33) and its ruler (12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Thus, John presents the world at odds with the person and message of Jesus.

Second, John indicates that the world rejects the disciples of Jesus. The world refers to those who do not belong to the community of Jesus’ followers,⁹⁶² while, in contrast, the disciples of Jesus are those who are saved out of the world

⁹⁶¹ Hays, *Gospels*, 336.

⁹⁶² Culpepper, “Realized,” 275.

(15:19; 17:6). Though Jesus and the disciples are *in* the world, they are not *of* the world (17:14, 16). According to John’s dualistic perspective within the narrative, one either *is* from the present world or *is not* from the present world (8:23). After Jesus’ departure from this world, the disciples remain in the world (13:1; 17), and their function is to continue Jesus’ mission (17:18; 20:21). However, John demonstrates that as the world hated Jesus, so the world continues to hate the followers of Jesus (15:18–19; 17:14). In fact, the degree of the world’s hostility toward the disciples is such that the disciples demonstrate a need for protection from the world (17:9–15). Inasmuch as the world is hostile toward the disciples, Jesus calls the disciples to seek comfort in Jesus, specifically in Jesus’ victory over the world (16:33). Ultimately John demonstrates that the disciples are rejected by the world.

Third, John demonstrates that the Paraclete/Spirit endured the same hostile reception from the world that Jesus and his disciples suffered. John makes clear that Jesus’ mission in the world continues after his departure not only through the disciples (15:27), but also through the Paraclete/Spirit. In fulfilling this mission, the Paraclete/Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (16:8–11).⁹⁶³ But, again, as the world did not receive or know Jesus or God (1:10–11; 17:25) or his disciples (15:18–19; 17:14), so the world does not know or receive the Paraclete/Spirit (14:17).

In the end, John depicts the world expressing hostility toward God, Jesus, the Paraclete/Spirit, and the disciples.

5.3.2 The Identity of “the Jews” in GJohn

John presents “the Jews” as being part of and representative of the world, specifically in their shared hostile response to God, Jesus, the disciples, and the Paraclete. First, in 15:24–25 John considers “the Jews” to be part of the world, inasmuch as he speaks about the world’s hatred for him and for the disciples and at the same time associates

⁹⁶³ Tolmie explains the work of the Paraclete in 16:8, ἐλέγξει τὸν κόσμον περὶ ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ περὶ κρίσεως, as providing convincing proof of the world’s wrongdoing. The lack of the articles before each noun suggests that general ideas are meant rather than individual issues. Thus, the Paraclete will demonstrate the world is guilty. Tolmie, *Farewell*, 86 fn. 44.

“their law,” in verse 25, namely the law of “the Jews,” with the world’s hatred.⁹⁶⁴ Second, in 7:1–24 John depicts “the Jews” seeking to kill Jesus (vv. 1, 19), and in the very same context Jesus speaks specifically of the world hating him (v. 7). Third, John attributes a similar relationship of “the Jews” to Jesus, the Father, and the Spirit as he does of the world to Jesus, the Father, and the Spirit. That is, ultimately “the Jews,” just as the world, do not know Jesus, the Father, or the Spirit (1:10; 5:37, 43; 7:28; 8:19, 55; 14:17; 17:25). On account of the similar description of the reaction of “the Jews” and the world to Jesus, the Father, and the Spirit, Rainbow concludes that John presents “the Jews” as “representatives of the world.”⁹⁶⁵ In this way, then, John presents “the Jews” as being one with the world in their antagonism toward Jesus and his followers.

Regarding the identity of “the Jews,” GJohn demonstrates that, while “the Jews” is indeed a referent to a single group that generally expresses hostility toward Jesus and his disciples, this group, nonetheless, consists of smaller groups that exhibit fractured loyalties with regard to Jesus and his followers. There are 51 references to “the Jews” in GJohn and in 38 of the 51 occurrences the term has a negative connotation.⁹⁶⁶ Studies⁹⁶⁷ on the identity of “the Jews” in GJohn abound,

⁹⁶⁴ See also John 7:19, 23 where Jesus associates the law with “the Jews.”

⁹⁶⁵ Rainbow, *Theology*, 136.

⁹⁶⁶ John 2:18, 20; 5:10, 15, 16, 18; 6:41, 52; 7:1, 13, 35; 8:22, 48, 52, 57; 9:18, 22 (2x); 10:19, 24, 31, 33; 11:8, 45, 54; 13:33; 18:12, 14, 20, 31, 36; 19:7, 12, 14, 21, 31, 38; 20:19. Other passages refer to Jewish customs, the title “king of ‘the Jews,’” and ethnicity.

⁹⁶⁷ For a survey of “the Jews” as a literary character in GJohn, see Urban C. Von Wahlde, “The Johannine ‘Jews’: A Critical Survey,” *NTS* 28 (1982): 33–60. For specific proposals on “the Jews” in GJohn, see John Ashton, “The Identity and Function of the Ioudaioi in the Fourth Gospel,” *NovT* 27 no. 1 (1985): 40–75; Cornelis Bennema, “The Identity and Composition of *OI IOYΔΑΙΟΙ* in the Gospel of John,” *TynBul* 60 no. 2 (2009): 239–63; Brown et al., *Introduction*, 160–72; Marinus de Jonge, “The Conflict Between Jesus and the Jews and the Radical Christology of the Fourth Gospel,” *PRSt* 20 no. 4 (1993): 341–55; T. Dozemann, “Sperma Abraham in Jn 8 and Related Literature,” *CBQ* 42 (1980): 342–58; Hakola, *Identity*; Anthony Le Donne, “The Jewish Leaders,” in *Jesus among Friends and Enemies: A Historical and Literary Introduction to Jesus in the Gospels*, ed. Chris Keith, Hurtado, Larry W. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), 199–217; Janis E. Leibig, “John and ‘the Jews’: Theological Antisemitism in the Fourth Gospel,” *JES* 20 no. 2 (1983): 209–34; Judith Lieu, “Anti-Judaism, the Jews, and the Worlds of the Fourth Gospel,” in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 168–82; Malcolm F. Lowe, “Who were the ‘Ioudaioi,’” *NovT* 18 no. 2 (1976): 101–30; Wayne A. Meeks, “‘Am I a Jew?’—Johannine Christianity and Judaism,” in *Christianity, Judaism, and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*, ed. Jacob Neusner (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 164–85; Stephen Motyer, “Bridging the Gap: How Might the Fourth Gospel Help Us Cope with the Legacy of Christianity’s Exclusive Claim over against Judaism?,” in *The Gospel of John and Christian*

proposing to see them as Judeans,⁹⁶⁸ Diaspora Jews,⁹⁶⁹ high officials,⁹⁷⁰ or simply as “representatives of unbelief.”⁹⁷¹ None of these proposals, however, captures the full essence of the Johannine use of “the Jews” as a character, since John’s usage includes qualities in the designation that transcend any single category proposed above.⁹⁷² Bennema provides a more nuanced understanding of the identity of “the Jews.” He suggests that the designation “the Jews” is a “distinct religious group in Jesus’ time.”⁹⁷³ That is, the group is generally depicted as being hostile toward Jesus, and yet, the group is also depicted as being internally fractured with regard to its view of Jesus. To explain this, Bennema writes:

Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel of John are a particular religious group within Judaism—the (strict) Torah-and temple-loyalists who are mainly located in Jerusalem and Judaea but could also have been present in Galilee. Their leaders consist of the chief priests who had the power of control and policymaking, and the Pharisees who had the ‘power’ of influence. We argued that John had a single referent in mind—albeit the referent is a composite group which does not present a uniform response. Οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as a group is and remains hostile towards Jesus, but it is also divided about him and some individual Ἰουδαῖοι were able to express sympathy and even belief in Jesus—though not always in the full Johannine sense.⁹⁷⁴

Bennema encapsulates the usage of “the Jews” in different passages and identifies the complexity of “the Jews” as a character in the narrative with respect to the “schisms” that occur within “the Jews” as a group. He observes, for example, that, on the one hand, the resurrection of Lazarus prompted many Jews to believe in Jesus

Theology, ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 183–92; Schnackenburg, *John*, 1:286–87; Fernando F. Segovia, “The Love and Hatred of Jesus and Johannine Sectarianism,” *CBQ* 43 no. 2 (1981): 258–72; Smith, *John*, 34–38; Von Wahlde, “Terms for Religious Authorities,” 231–53; Urban C. Von Wahlde, “Literary Structure and Theological Argument in Three Discourses with the Jews in the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* 103 no. 4 (1984): 575–84.

⁹⁶⁸ Lowe, “Who were the ‘Ioudaioi’,” 119–24.

⁹⁶⁹ North, *Journey*, 148–67.

⁹⁷⁰ Von Wahlde, “Johannine ‘Jews’,” 33–60.

⁹⁷¹ Bultmann, *John*, 86.

⁹⁷² John Ashton, *Studying John: Approaches to the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 63, 70.

⁹⁷³ Bennema, “Identity,” 263. Motyer also sees “the Jews” as a referent to a religious group. Motyer, *Father*, 46–57.

⁹⁷⁴ Bennema, “Identity,” 262.

(11:45; 12:11), and, on the other, that this same resurrection roused other Jews to plan to put Jesus to death (11:46–53).⁹⁷⁵

Bennema’s proposal for understanding the identity of “the Jews” is compelling for two reasons. First, it explains GJohn’s general use of “the Jews” as a group that is hostile toward Jesus. Second, it explains GJohn’s narration of the internal discord between certain members of “the Jews” with respect to their reception or rejection of Jesus. This second point also explains GJohn’s reference to secret believers in Jesus who were members of this group that was hostile to Jesus (3:1–11; 12:42; 19:38), and yet these secret believers in Jesus feared to make this confession publicly on account of the repercussions they might suffer from “the Jews.” Bennema’s view encapsulates John’s usage of this term to refer to individuals who are hostile to Jesus and to those who are sympathetic to Jesus.

5.3.3 Hostility between “the Jews” and Jesus/Disciples in GJohn

John depicts the conflict between “the Jews” and Jesus’ followers through references to the fear of “the Jews” (7:13; 9:22; 12:42 fear of the Pharisees; 19:38; 20:19) and expulsion from the synagogue (9:22; 12:42; 16:2). In this section I propose that “the Jews” employed fear and expulsion to restrain members of the Jewish community from becoming disciples of Jesus.

The first reference to the fear of “the Jews” appears in 7:13 as the passage narrates how Jesus’ sympathizers feared repercussions from “the Jews” for open dialogue about Jesus. The context of 7:13 is the festival of the Tabernacles for which “the Jews” gathered in Judea (7:3), and John remarks in this pericope that “the Jews” had hoped to see Jesus at this festival (7:11). The sentiment in the crowd concerning Jesus was schismatic—some complained, others affirmed him as a good man, still others viewed him as a deceiver (7:12), but no one spoke of him openly for fear of “the Jews” (7:13). The nature of this fear seems to be related to the apprehension of suffering consequences for being associated with Jesus, that is, of being subjected to the persecution of “the Jews” that was directed at Jesus; for the narrative makes clear that “the Jews” were seeking to kill Jesus (7:1, 13, 25–26). This is not the only

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid., 260–62.

mention in GJohn of “the Jews” seeking to kill Jesus, the earlier reference appearing in 5:1–18, in which John employs the imperfect διώκω (5:16, see also 15:20)⁹⁷⁶ to express their aggression and relentless pursuit of Jesus.⁹⁷⁷ According to 5:1–18, after Jesus healed the lame man, “the Jews” sought to kill Jesus for breaking the Sabbath and for claiming that God was his father, which in their understanding placed Jesus on a par with God (5:18).⁹⁷⁸ The narrative in John 7, then, alludes to 5:1–18 in that in

⁹⁷⁶ The imperfect tense in 5:16 can be customary, Beasley-Murray translates it as “used to persecute,” see Beasley-Murray, *John*, 68. Ingressive seems to be more appropriate since this is the first mention of Jewish leaders’ persecution of Jesus. For the ingressive view, see Brown, *John*, 212–13; Harris, *John*, 109. See appendix B for the use of διώκω in other NT writings in reference to opposition to early believers in Jesus. John also uses ζητέω to convey the idea of pursuing Jesus with the intent of persecution. There are 29 combined references to Jesus being sought (ζητέω, 23 of 34 total uses in GJohn)/found (εὕρισκω, 6 of total 19 in GJohn) and in only five of these 29 combined references to Jesus is he sought/found with positive intent (1:38, 41, 45; 13:33; 20:15). In 13 occurrences his seekers have ill intent, with the majority of the references being to arrest/kill him (5:18; 7:1, 19, 20, 25, 30; 8:37, 40; 10:39; 11:8; 18:4, 7, 8). In the remaining 11 uses of ζητέω/εὕρισκω, the meaning of seeking/finding appears to be neutral (6:24, 25, 26; 7:11, 34 (2x), 35, 36 (2x); 8:21; 11:56), but even in some of these 11 passages a negative meaning can also be deduced. Thus, *pace* Pazdan, who attributes a positive meaning to ζητέω-εὕρισκω as part of her paradigm of Johannine discipleship, most of the uses of ζητέω-εὕρισκω have a negative connotation. Pazdan, “Discipleship,” 267–300.

⁹⁷⁷ The other passages denoting the Jewish opposition to Jesus are: 5:16–18; 7:1, 13, 19–20, 25, 30, 32, 44; 8:20, 37, 40, 59; 10:39; 11:8, 46–53, 57.

⁹⁷⁸ The lame man in John 5:15 illustrates the extent of influence the religious leaders had on him, such that the lame man’s allegiance to the Jewish leaders prompted him to return to “the Jews” and turn on Jesus even after being healed by him. Contrary to the majority of commentators who interpret the lame man negatively, some portray him positively in relation to Jesus. Staley suggests that the lame man is a faithful witness rather than a “tattle-tale” by comparing the lame man to the Samaritan woman in that neither of them are said to have believed although they both testified of Jesus’ power. Additionally, Staley observes that no character in GJohn “fully grasps the narrator’s perspective that ‘Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God’ (20:31), except for the story’s narrator, the BD (21:24–25).” For these reasons, Staley presents a more positive interpretation of the lame man in John 5. Howard responds to Staley’s interpretation by suggesting that a positive interpretation of the lame man is not the most natural reading of the text, especially since (1) there is no comment on the lame man’s faith, (2) he does not respond with affirmation to Jesus’ question nor express joy on account of his own healing, and (3) the result of the lame man’s testimony to “the Jews” is the persecution of Jesus. I would also add that since the lame man does not follow Jesus after he is healed and since Jesus is depicted as pointing out his sin for which the man does not repent (5:14), it is most natural to view this character as a negative example of interaction with Jesus. Resseguie also advances a positive interpretation of the lame man based on the consistent positive use of ἀναγγέλλω in GJohn (e.g., 4:25; 16:13–15), which leads Resseguie to view the lame man as a faithful witness to Jesus’ miracle. However, it is imbalanced to elevate a single verb above the rest of the contextual evidence to the contrary. Second, in the other passages, ἀναγγέλλω is attributed to persons who have already expressed a favorable view of Jesus. Thus, Resseguie’s argument is not convincing. Beck points to the lame man picking up his mat and witnessing to “the Jews” concerning his own healing as evidence of receiving Jesus’ words, obeying Jesus, and believing in Jesus. While Beck advances the lame man as a paradigmatic disciple, Beck simultaneously characterizes him as ambiguous in his response to Jesus. Thus, Beck’s analysis appears indecisive, even if more positive overall. Like Resseguie and Staley, Beck fails to observe the final Johannine verdict concerning the pericope of the blind man which ends

7:23 Jesus attributes the Jewish aggression toward him expressed in John 7 to his prior healing of the lame man in John 5. Moreover, narratologically chapter 7 records Jesus' first reappearance in Jerusalem since the narrative in John 5, thus chapters 5 and 7 should be linked, in that the events in John 5 prompted the persecution in John 7. Inasmuch as Jesus was a target of persecution at the hands of "the Jews," the idea of associating with Jesus aroused fear among the members of the Jewish community and among the sympathizers of Jesus, that the persecution directed at Jesus would be applied to those who might be associated with him (15:18, 20).

The second reference to the fear of "the Jews" appears in 9:22 where expulsion from the synagogue (ἀποσυνάγωγος) is presented as the basis for the fear. In 9:22, although the primary questions concerning Jesus are directed toward the blind man and while he is the chief target of the ridicule by "the Jews" until he is cast out of the synagogue (9:28, 34),⁹⁷⁹ the characters who express fear of "the Jews" in this pericope are the blind man's parents. In their attempt to ascertain the full account of Jesus granting sight to the blind man, "the Jews" summoned the blind man's parents to answer questions about their son's condition from birth and to explain the process by which he was healed (9:18–21). However, John indicates that the parents deflected from answering the questions because of their fear of "the Jews" (9:22–23), that is, evidently because they feared being put out of the synagogue (7:22).⁹⁸⁰ This pericope suggests that there was a general understanding among the Judeans that any association with Jesus could result in hostility from "the Jews," for as this episode shows, the parents exhibited reluctance even to discuss the encounter between their son and Jesus. It appears that the fear of "the Jews" stems from the threat of being expelled from the synagogue, and this fear resulted in the people refraining from speaking about Jesus.

with Jesus' persecution and intent to kill him by "the Jews" (5:16–18) as prompted by their conversation with the lame man concerning Jesus. Beck, *Discipleship*, 86–91; James M. Howard, "The Significance of Minor Characters in the Gospel of John," *BSac* 163 (2006): 71–73; Resseguie, *Strange*, 134–38; Jeffrey L. Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark, Reaching for the Light: Reading Character in John 5 and 9," *Semeia* 53 (1991): 58–64.

⁹⁷⁹ Note the use of ἐκβάλλω in John 9:34 that is similar to its use in Luke 6:22.

The third mention of fear is in 12:42–43 where John refers to fearing the Pharisees, and this occurrence is also linked with expulsion from the synagogue. This pericope distinguishes itself in two respects. First, in contrast to 9:22, where the potential victims of the expulsion were common Judeans, in 12:42 the target is Jewish rulers. Second, the nature of the fear is further nuanced by being linked to the glory that comes with being associated with a synagogue. As 12:43 reads: “For they loved human praise more than praise that comes from God.” Ultimately, then, this passage explains the phenomenon of refusing to associate with Jesus publicly for two interconnected reasons—the fear of expulsion from the synagogue and the love of the praise that comes from association with the synagogue.

Expulsion from the synagogue is also mentioned in 16:2, where the victims are the disciples. In addition to the above discussion concerning the antagonists in 16:2 (see §5.2.2.1), I observe that *λατρείαν προσφέρειν τῷ θεῷ* (to offer service to God) suggests that the antagonists were primarily Jewish, as opposed to Roman (contra Heemstra above in §5.2.2.1). In the NT, the noun *λατρεία* appears four times in addition to John 16:2, and on three of those occasions, it is in reference to sacrificial ministry to God (Rom 9:4; Heb 9:1, 6), while in one instance it is a metaphoric allusion to the same (12:1).⁹⁸¹ Since in John 16:2 *λατρεία* is appended to *προσφέρειν*, it carries the same connotation of cultic service to God.⁹⁸² Paul serves as an illustration of this type of service in Gal 1:13–14 (see also Acts 22:3–4) where he refers to zeal for God producing hostility toward Christians. Thus, John 16:2 foreshadows that to which Paul refers in Gal 1 and that which Acts actually narrates as being the experience of the followers of Jesus after his departure.

Another reference to the fear of “the Jews” is found in 19:38 where Joseph of Arimathea feared consequences from his colleagues for associating with Jesus (see

⁹⁸⁰ Beasley-Murray suggests that their fear would have been baseless unless they were ready to confess Jesus as a prophet sent by God because of their son’s miraculous healing, but refrained from openly supporting Jesus because of their fear of the consequences. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 157.

⁹⁸¹ The verb *λατρεύω* is scattered throughout the NT with the same meaning of service to God, with the only exception being Rom 1:25 where Paul refers to serving the creation in contrast with serving God.

⁹⁸² Strathmann notes, “The concrete idea of sacrifice seems always to cling to the noun no less than to the verb.” Strathmann, “*λατρεύω, λατρεία*,” *TDNT*, 4:65.

Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50 where he is designated as a ruler). While not much is stated regarding the identity of Joseph of Arimathea in 19:38–42, the text makes clear that he was a disciple of Jesus, but that he believed in Jesus secretly for fear of “the Jews.” Despite the brevity of this narrative, this pericope corroborates the statement in 12:42 that some Jewish leaders believed in Jesus but were afraid to confess this belief.⁹⁸³ Joseph’s request to take the body of Jesus in order to bury it suggests that he ultimately mustered sufficient courage to overcome the fear of “the Jews” and to act in accordance with his belief in Jesus irrespective of the consequences he might suffer for public association with Jesus (see Mark 15:43).⁹⁸⁴

Another such sympathizer of Jesus with whom the readers of GJohn would be familiar is Nicodemus. Scholarly opinion regarding Nicodemus varies, as he is considered to be an unbeliever,⁹⁸⁵ a partial believer,⁹⁸⁶ an ambiguous disciple,⁹⁸⁷ a true disciple,⁹⁸⁸ a secret disciple,⁹⁸⁹ a member of the establishment confronting a

⁹⁸³ Farelly also links 12:42–43 with 19:38–42 and observes that Joseph’s involvement at Jesus’ burial is his attempt to “confess his allegiance” which is in stark contrast to the absence of the disciples at the burial, an act that “can hardly go unnoticed.” The disciples’ absence further reinforces the notion of the fear of “the Jews.” Farelly, *Disciples*, citing 80.

⁹⁸⁴ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss whether Joseph of Arimathea displays traits of true belief. Bennema judges his interaction with Jesus as reflecting inadequate faith from John’s point of view. Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 190–95. In contrast to Bennema, Joseph of Arimathea is presented positively through a comparison of the accounts of GMark and GJohn in Hunt et al., eds., *Character Studies*, 646–57.

⁹⁸⁵ Collins, *These Things*, 15, 58. De Jonge writes, “[Nicodemus] does not belong to the children of God.” de Jonge, *Stranger*, 29–47, citing 42.

⁹⁸⁶ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 135–36, 233; Sean Freyne, “Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self,” in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Christians, Jews, “Others” in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 127; Francis J. Moloney, *Belief in the Word: Reading the Fourth Gospel, John 1–4* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 121.

⁹⁸⁷ J. M. Bassler, “Mixed Signals: Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* 108 no. 4 (1989); Beck, *Discipleship*, 63–70; Hylan, *Imperfect*, 23–40; Gabi Renz, “Nicodemus: An Ambiguous Disciple? A Narrative Sensitive Investigation,” in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, ed. John Lierman (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 254–83. Beck writes, “Nicodemus’ final allegiance is an unresolved indeterminacy in the Fourth Gospel...He stands in the text as a potential disciple who has progressed toward, but has not yet arrived at an appropriate response to Jesus...in the end his indecision is a decision not to commit.” Beck, *Discipleship*, 69.

⁹⁸⁸ Beirne calls Nicodemus an example of full discipleship (103). J. M. Auwers, “La nuit de Nicodème (Jn 3.2; 19.39) ou l’ombre du langage,” *RB* 97 (1990): 501; Beirne, *Women and Men*, 67–104; Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 72, fn. 128; Brown, *Death*, 1266; Bultmann, *John*, 133, fn. 2; Sandra Marie Schneiders, *Written that you May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 119.

⁹⁸⁹ Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 83; Conway, *Men and Women*, 86, 101; Martyn, *History*, 87; Smith, *John*, 366.

fringe sect,⁹⁹⁰ or as “the prime example of one whose expression of faith is dictated by his fear of ‘the Jews.’”⁹⁹¹ While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to delve into matters of characterization of Nicodemus,⁹⁹² it is important to take note of Nicodemus’ initial secretive interest in Jesus, of his subsequent attempted defense of Jesus before the Jewish leaders, and of his ultimate expression of honor at Jesus’ burial. Nicodemus’ first appearance in GJohn—in which he meets with Jesus at night seemingly in order to keep the meeting secret⁹⁹³—suggests that he feared to be exposed as Jesus’ sympathizer (2:23–3:2).⁹⁹⁴ As in the case of Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus’ secrecy corresponds to the narrator’s commentary in 12:42, that the fear of reprisals from the Jewish leaders arguably prevented other Jews from associating with Jesus publicly.

In his second appearance in GJohn (7:50–52), however, Nicodemus seems to advocate on Jesus’ behalf in that he challenges the Pharisees concerning their apparent neglect of the law in their investigation of Jesus (7:51). As a result, Nicodemus is served an insult by the Pharisees of being insignificant in that they accuse him of sharing a common geographic origin with Jesus, that is, of coming from Galilee (7:52).⁹⁹⁵ This narrative illustrates how even a Jewish leader may be intimidated by “the Jews” for expressing sympathy toward or association with Jesus.

⁹⁹⁰ David K. Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 115.

⁹⁹¹ Steven A. Hunt, “Nicodemus, Lazarus, and the Fear of ‘the Jews’ in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Repetitions and Variations in the Fourth Gospel: Style, Text, Interpretation*, ed. Gilbert van Belle, Michael Labahn, and P. Maritz (Leuven; Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2009), 201.

⁹⁹² See Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 77–85; Hunt et al., eds., *Character Studies*, 249–59; Craig R. Koester, “Theological Complexity and the Characterization of Nicodemus in John’s Gospel,” in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner (London: T & T Clark, 2013), 165–81. For a more positive presentation of Nicodemus from the spatial/temporal point of view, see Resseguie, *Strange*, 120–27.

⁹⁹³ In reference to the darkness–light symbolism, most commentators agree that it is more than just a temporal marker. Barrett, *John*, 204–5; Brown, *John*, 130; Carson, *John*, 186; Conway, *Men and Women*, 92–3; Koester, *Symbolism*, 47; Morris, *John*, 187, fn. 8; Renz, “Nicodemus,” 261, fn. 26. Cotterrell and Turner dissent and interpret the reference to the night as merely a chronological marker because John did not mark it by moving it to the front of the clause which would have been typical to accent this feature in the narrative (see Matt 28:13; Luke 21:37). Peter Cotterrell and Max Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989), 282.

⁹⁹⁴ The lexical overlap between 2:23–25 and 3:1–2 suggests that Nicodemus had some level of belief in Jesus. For John 2:23–3:15 as a single pericope, see Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 79, fn. 15.

⁹⁹⁵ Hylén supposes that Nicodemus’ response to the question from the Jewish leaders suggests that he is in the category of the Pharisees who believed in Jesus. Hylén, *Imperfect*, 33.

In his final appearance (19:39), Nicodemus is portrayed honoring Jesus publicly at his burial.⁹⁹⁶ Nicodemus appears in this scene together with Joseph of Arimathea, who, as already noted above, was explicitly introduced as a secret disciple of Jesus (19:38). Potentially, then, Nicodemus, along with Joseph of Arimathea, serves as an illustration of a Jewish leader who initially was a secret believer in Jesus for fear of “the Jews” (19:38), but who ultimately overcame this fear and exhibited his association with and belief in Jesus publicly.⁹⁹⁷

The final mention of the fear of “the Jews” is in 20:19 where the disciples are gathered behind locked doors. This harkens back to 16:2 where Jesus is depicted as warning his disciples of future hostility directed at them. John 20:19 illustrates that the pressure and persecution implemented by “the Jews” against Jesus and those who were sympathetic to his mission was effective to such a degree that his most loyal followers feared for their safety because of public display of their faith in Jesus. John 20:19 differs from the previous references to the fear of “the Jews” in that the followers of Jesus no longer fear the act of professing their belief in Jesus, but, instead, they fear the actual and apparently imminent repercussions for publicly associating with Jesus. In 18:19, the high priest focuses on Jesus’ disciples as part of the interrogation and since Jesus was executed, the disciples would have reason to hide from “the Jews” in 20:19. Certainly Peter’s threefold denial in 18:17–27 is in response to the fear of being identified as Jesus’ disciple (and incur negative consequences) as observable in the six fold use of *μαθητής* and the use of *ἀκολουθέω* in 18:15–27.

In the end, John’s references to the expulsion from the synagogue and to the fear of “the Jews” reveal a context of hostility between Jesus/his disciples and “the Jews.”

⁹⁹⁶ Bauckham concludes that Nicodemus’ honor of Jesus at his burial is fitting for a king. Bauckham, *Testimony*, 165. See also Beirne, *Women and Men*, 86; Keener, *John*, 1157, 1162.

⁹⁹⁷ Contra Beck who does not view Nicodemus as a model disciple because there is no evidence of a faith response and Nicodemus does not witness to others. While John does not narrate a confession from Nicodemus, the spices he brought for Jesus’ burial suggest Nicodemus’ recognition of Jesus’ kingship. Beck, *Discipleship*, 63–70.

5.4 Summary

In this chapter, I presented conflict between “the Jews”/the world and Jesus/disciples as the general historical background for GJohn against which the compensatory benefits of discipleship can be understood.⁹⁹⁸ John’s references to the fear of “the Jews,” expulsion from the synagogue, and the animosity from the world is congruent with the evidence from the other NT writings.⁹⁹⁹ I propose that this atmosphere of opposition created a need for John to write a Gospel that narrated an account of analogous hostility and that provided a paradigm for an appropriate response to this hostility, ultimately to encourage his readers to maintain their commitment to Jesus. To counter potential defection in response to opposition (16:2), John deploys images that accent relational intimacy between Jesus and his followers.

The Jewish hostility might have been a factor in the then-current experience of Johannine believers, or it might have been an experience of prior time which continued to form part of the outlook of Johannine believers.¹⁰⁰⁰ Expulsion from the synagogues resulted in being ostracized from the social life in the Jewish community and in losing the identity determined by association with the synagogue. John counters the fear of hostility with encouragement, that following Jesus would provide a new and a more desirable identity, one that was incomparable with the Jewish life defined by the local synagogue.¹⁰⁰¹ For example, though the blind man was put out of the local synagogue (9:34), he obtained and embraced a new identity in the Messiah

⁹⁹⁸ In John 1–12, every chapter contains an element of opposition toward Jesus or his followers (e.g., 1:11; 2:18–21; 3:11, 36; 4:3, 44; 5:16–18; 6:60–66; 7:1, 19; 8:59; 9:22; 10:39; 11:53; 12:10, 42). This hostility is also observable in 13:2, 21; 16:2, 33; 17:14; 18–19; 20:19; 21:18.

⁹⁹⁹ See appendix B. Bennema writes, “The conflict between Jesus and the Jewish religious authorities of his time is probably paradigmatic of the conflicts his followers will face in later times—whether Jewish Christians versus synagogue Judaism (16.2) or believers/church versus the world at large (15.18–16.4; 17.14–16). Hence...John 9.22 and 12.42 may simply reflect the general situation towards the end of the first century.” Bennema, *Power*, 251–52.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Okure similarly observes: “The Evangelist seeks to understand his own situation and problems in the light of Jesus’ own situation.” Teresa Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission: A Contextual Study of John 4:1–42*, WUNT 2.31 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1988), 259. Cf. Bernier, *Aposynagōgos*, 133–34.

¹⁰⁰¹ Brown and Moloney make a similar connection: “The Gospel was written in good part to deepen the faith of believers so that they could understand that what they had gained by way of God’s life more than made up for what had been lost in their former religious adhesion. The evangelist speaks to those who accepted Jesus, thereby becoming God’s children, begotten not by human intervention but

(9:35–38). Also, although the disciples confined themselves in the upper room for fear of “the Jews” (20:19), in a post-resurrection visit from Jesus they were reinvigorated with courage to remain faithful until the end on account of their association with Jesus (21:19, 23–25).

As I argued in the previous three chapters, John’s message to his readers who perhaps lived in conflict with their neighbors (9:8–13) and authorities (9:14–34) is that continuous commitment to Jesus results in rewards that outweigh the privileges obtained within the Jewish community. For discipleship with Jesus places Jesus’ followers into the divine family, keeps them in an abiding relationship with the Father and the Son through the Spirit that is experienced in the present time and culminates in the future, and designates them as royal friends of Jesus. When we read GJohn against the canvas of hostility toward Jesus’ followers and recognize the benefits of continuous commitment to Jesus, Johannine discipleship becomes appealing as a worthwhile pursuit even in the face of opposition.

by God (1:12–13), in order to make them appreciate the life they had been given.” Brown et al., *Introduction*, 182.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The primary contribution of this thesis is a focused study of the benefits of discipleship in GJohn. While other scholars have attempted to explain Johannine discipleship through a single lens (e.g., family), the breadth of John's imagery and the multitude of the themes associated with discipleship indicate that viewing the entirety of Johannine discipleship through a single theme is unsatisfactory. Consequently, it is my contention that John encourages devotion to Jesus by featuring certain themes that can be grouped under three primary categories and designated as compensatory benefits of commitment to Jesus in light of the potential cost of discipleship. These three benefits are: membership in the divine family, the abiding presence of the Father and the Son through the Spirit with the believer in the present time and in the future, and royal friendship with Jesus. John deploys corollary benefits, some of which are distinct to a primary benefit while others are presented as constituent of more than one primary theme (see below). These additional themes fill out John's bouquet of benefits that are conferred upon the disciple who continuously believes in Jesus.

My proposal that John deploys the above themes as compensatory benefits of discipleship rests on three points. First, the inclusion of the promise of life in the purpose statement (20:31) forges a link between discipleship and the reward for believing. Notwithstanding the debate regarding the tense of πιστεύ[σ]ητε in 20:31,¹⁰⁰² the present participle in the clause, ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ, functions modally and thus suggests that life is obtained through continuous belief in his name.¹⁰⁰³ John's juxtaposition of belief with the resultant benefit of life indicates to the reader that there are benefits for believing. Second, a chiasmic reading of John's Prologue suggests that 1:12b is the central point of the Prologue, that is, the Logos became human to give believers the right to become children of God. This benefit of becoming a child of God is conferred specifically on

¹⁰⁰² See §1.3.

¹⁰⁰³ Harris, *John*, 336.

the individual who continuously believes in his name (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, v. 12).¹⁰⁰⁴ The third reason to view benefits as motivators for discipleship is John's frequent presentation of the theme of discipleship in the context of opposition that might prompt defection.

In chapter one of the thesis, I introduced the argument by presenting an overview of scholarly literature on Johannine discipleship as well as my rationale for my inquiry.

In chapter two I argued that membership in the divine family is the first primary benefit because of the prominence of familial terminology and because of the placement of the family motif in GJohn. The placement of the family theme suggests a chiasm in the prologue with the focal point being in 1:12b and the family motif essentially forms two inclusios: the first inclusio in the public ministry of Jesus (1:12–13 with 12:36) and the second inclusio of the entire Gospel (1:12–13 with 20:17 and 21:5). Because the theme of life (ζωή) appears in juxtaposition to kinship terminology, I argued that the promise of ζωή (20:31) should be understood as the ability and the quality of the believer to relate within the divine family. Membership in the divine family yields the corollary benefits of love, knowledge of God and of the truth, freedom from sin, walking in the light, salvation, avoidance of judgment/destruction, resurrection, protection, performance of great works, affirmation of genuine discipleship, honor, glory, and unity/oneness of the Father and the Son with the other disciples. These benefits enhance the believer's experience in the divine family.

In chapter three I suggested that we can understand abiding as the second primary benefit in GJohn. I argued that abiding is a promise that is experienced by the disciple in the present time (14:23) and in the future (14:2–3). I selected abiding as a major motif because of the frequent occurrence and the peculiar meaning of μένω/μονή in the Gospel. John situates his presentation of the theme of abiding in the OT imagery of God dwelling with his people. John subsequently develops the abiding of the Father and the Son through the Spirit with(in) the believer (14:1–3,

¹⁰⁰⁴ John deploys the verb πιστεύω in the present tense 50 of 98 times.

15–24), and the believer fulfilling his obligation to abide in Jesus (15:1–11) which results in additional corollary benefits—the presence of the Paraclete, love, peace, joy, avoidance of judgment, answered requests, the ability to perform great works, fruit, and affirmation of genuine discipleship. The promise of God’s abiding presence reaches its zenith in eschatology when Jesus will provide a dwelling place (μονή) for his disciples (14:2–3).

In chapter four I argued that royal friendship is the third primary benefit in GJohn. I argued that the placement of 15:12–17 in the FD, space dedicated to the explanation of the theme, and the immediate context, establish friendship as a significant and distinct benefit in GJohn. I suggested that John depicts Jesus as a royal figure who invites his followers into a friendship in which the followers experience the honor and privileges of being members of his royal circle. There are three reasons why royal friendship is a viable interpretation of 15:12–17. First, classical Greek, Roman, and Hellenistic writings provide a literary context in which φίλος bears political overtones. Second, John presents Jesus as a king (i.e., 1:49; 3:3–5; 6:14–15; 12:13–15; 18:33–19:21) which suggests that Jesus is a royal friend to his followers. Third, the context of 15:12–17 contains the imagery and language of a shepherd-king, subordination, election, obligations, and benefits (e.g., love, knowledge of the Father, fruit, joy, and answered requests) that would have characterized ancient royal friendship.

In chapter five I reviewed the predominant proposals for the historical background to GJohn. I suggested that John encourages his readers to continuous commitment to Jesus by promising compensatory benefits in light of the general backdrop of opposition from “the Jews” and the world toward believers. John’s rhetorical constructions that convey opposition to Jesus and to his disciples can be plausibly understood as the background to John’s promotion of discipleship (8:31; 6:60–71; 15:8). In light of the fear of expulsion from the synagogues (9:22; 12:42; 16:2), opposition from the Jewish leadership (7:13; 9:22; 12:42; 19:38; 20:19), and hatred from the world (15:18–27; 17:14), there is a possibility of defection (16:1–2). To encourage discipleship and curtail potential defection from following Jesus, John extends the aforementioned benefits.

In 6:66–67, John depicts a scene in which many of Jesus’ disciples cease to follow him. In response, John portrays Jesus as asking his disciples, “Do you also wish to go away?” Peter functions as the representative of “the twelve” when he replies: “Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have believed and we have come to know that you are the Holy One of God” (6:68). Peter’s verbal allegiance was appended to his belief that Jesus’ teaching would result in eternal life.¹⁰⁰⁵ The question Jesus posed to his disciples, “Do you also wish to go away?” serves as a resounding echo to the readers of GJohn whom John encourages to emulate Peter’s response and to recognize that certain benefits await the believer in Jesus (1:12; 14:1–3; 15:13–16; 20:31).

¹⁰⁰⁵ Harris, *John*, 147.

APPENDIX A: THE BENEFITS OF DISCIPLESHIP IN GJOHN

Here I catalog the potential benefits of discipleship according to the first mention of each benefit in GJohn.

Benefit	Passage
Life (eternal)	1:4; 3:15–21, 36; 4:10,14; 5:21, 24, 38–40; 6:27, 33, 51–58; 8:51; 10:10, 27–29; 11:24–26; 12:25–27, 50; 14:6, 19; 17:2, 3
Resurrection	5:25–30; 8:51–53; 11:24–27
Family	1:12; 10:29; 17:2, 6, 9, 11–12, 24; 18:9; 20:17; 21:5
Salvation	3:17; 10:9
Do not perish	3:16
No Judgment	3:17–19; 5:22–30; 12:47–50
Avoid God's wrath	3:36
Remain/Walk in the Light/Do not remain in darkness	3:19–21; 8:12; 12:36, 46
Abiding with the Father and the Son	14:1–3; 14:15–24
Future presence with Jesus	12:26; 14:1–3; 17:24
Paraclete	7:37–39; 14:15–27; 16:7; 20:22–23
Freedom from sin	8:21–24, 8:31–36, 39–47, 51; 9:41
Truth	8:31
Protection	10:28–29; 17:11–13
Knowledge of the Father and the Son	10:14–15, 27–29; 14:20; 15:15; 17:26
Honor from the Father	12:25–26
Greater works	14:12–15
Answered requests	14:12–14; 15:7, 16; 16:23–26
Peace	14:27; 16:33; 20:19, 21, 26
Joy	15:11; 16:20–24; 17:13
Fruit	4:36; 12:24; 15:2–8, 16
Friendship	15:13–16
Unity	11:52; 14:20; 17:6, 11, 21, 22, 23, 26
Love	13:1; 14:21, 23; 15:9–17; 16:27; 17:23, 26
Glory	17:22, 24
Forgiveness of others' sins (part of the mission motif)	20:22–23

APPENDIX B: THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN TENSION IN THE NT

The study below supplements the discussion in chapter 5 concerning the conflict between “the Jews” and the world with Jesus and the disciples. The aim of this section is to present additional evidence from the NT writings to establish a socio-religious milieu of early Christianity that is characterized by antagonism toward Jesus and his followers; hostility that began during the ministry of Jesus and continued into the period of the readers of GJohn.

1. Synoptic Gospels

Even a cursory survey of the Gospels yields a portrait of conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. Matthew mentions tension in response to Jesus’ exorcisms (9:32–34; 12:22–24) and his claims to be the Lord of the Sabbath (12:1–14) and Messiah (26:63–68). In 9:34, 10:25, and 12:24–27 (=Luke 11:15–19), the tension was elevated to the point of Jesus being accused of being “in league with the devil.”¹⁰⁰⁶ He was accused of being a deceiver (27:63) and a blasphemer (9:3; 26:65). In 10:16–23, Jesus warns his disciples of impending arrests, scourging, and even death in the synagogues (20:17; 23:34) for “my sake” (v.18) and “because of my name” (v.22). Immediately after this warning, Jesus explains that those who associate with him will experience the same treatment as he did:

A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! (10:24–25).

In the subsequent passage, Matt 10:32, a link to John 16:2 is made by the use of *ὁμολογέω*.¹⁰⁰⁷

According to Matt 10:32 (=Luke 12:8), those who confess Jesus before others will be acknowledged by Jesus in the future before the Father. The public confession that is expected of Jesus’ followers appears in the context of death threats (10:26–42); this is also the context of John 15:18–16:4, which features opposition from the world and synagogue leaders (John 16:2). Thus, Matthew depicts the

¹⁰⁰⁶ Larry W. Hurtado, *How on Earth did Jesus Become a God? Historical Questions About Earliest Devotion to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 158. The pattern of associating the opposition with the devil/Satan is characteristic of a number of NT writings. In John 8:44, Jesus accuses “the Jews” of having the devil as their father, and they in return accuse him of having a demon (7:20). In Rev 2:9 and 3:9, the opposition to Jewish-Christians in Smyrna and Philadelphia is designated as the “synagogue of Satan” (Revelation is contemporaneous with GJohn, dated ca. 80–100 CE, Craig R. Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 38A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 79). Lambrecht concludes that the designation “synagogues of Satan” is attributed to certain Jews in those cities because of their instigation of persecution of Jewish-Christians as stated in Rev 2:10 (525). Jan Lambrecht, “‘Synagogues of Satan’ (Rev 2:9 and 3:9): Anti-Judaism in the Book of Revelation,” in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel: Papers of the Leuven Colloquium, 2000*, ed. D. Pollefeyt and F. Vandecasteele-Vanneuville R. Bieringer (Assen: Royal van Gorcum, 2001), 514–30.

¹⁰⁰⁷ See below for a more thorough treatment of confession in the NT.

Jewish leadership as being in opposition to Jesus; and Jesus warns that his followers will experience the same treatment that he experienced in his ministry.

GMark similarly suggests early persecution of Jewish Christians. In Mark 13 (=Luke 21:12), Jesus is said to have predicted future tribulation. He warned that his followers will be delivered to the courts, flogged in the synagogues, and will stand trial in front of governors and kings because of his name (v.9). Moreover, they will be arrested (v.11), they will experience betrayal from family members (v.12), and will be hated (v.13). Hurtado observes that there are parallels between the warnings of Mark 13 and Jesus' trials in Mark 14–15 in that Jesus was betrayed by a close associate (14:44–45), was arrested by local rulers (14:43–48), stood trial before the Sanhedrin (14:53–65) and the Roman governor Pilate (15:1–15), and was scourged (15:15–19). Therefore, the entire episode of Jesus' arrest, beating, and crucifixion is intended to "speak to the experiences and concerns of GMark's first readers....to have a practical, existential force and [these narratives] would have been read accordingly."¹⁰⁰⁸ Hurtado reasons that Mark would have expected his readers to relate to the charges against Jesus and to the reality of being pressured to curse Jesus; therefore, Hurtado argues that the events must not be dated later than the writing of the Gospels, which he supposes to be ca. 65–72 CE.¹⁰⁰⁹ He writes:

Given that the Jewish-Christian heritage of Mark's readers seems to lie in their past, and that the intended readership is likely to have been heavily Gentile in make-up, the experiences of being arraigned before synagogue authorities on charges of blasphemy must derive from some time before the date of GMark. That is, even before the expulsion of the Johannine Jewish Christians from their synagogues, the putative force of Gamaliel II's *Birkhat ha-minim*, and the efforts of Javnean rabbis to limit the variations in Jewish belief and practice, Christian Jews were probably experiencing the sort condemnations for blasphemy reflected in the Markan narrative of Jesus' Sanhedrin trial. To be sure, these synagogue actions were localized and ad hoc, whereas in the post-70 CE period there appears to have been an effort toward a more consistently applied sanction against Jewish Christians.¹⁰¹⁰

Hurtado's point is not to comment on the historicity of the *Birkat ha-Minim*'s relation to Johannine expulsion passages, but rather to affirm that there is sufficient evidence within the GMark to conclude that persecution was experienced and anticipated by early Jewish Christians as depicted in the Gospel narratives. The point that is clear from GMark is that persecution is tied to a local synagogue (13:9); that is similar to Matthean statements regarding the persecution of Jewish Christians.

Luke also depicts the tension between Jesus and the Jewish authorities and accents Jesus' warnings to his followers about future conflicts because of him. In Luke 4:28–29, Jesus is portrayed as enraging the synagogue audience in Capernaum by his Messianic claim such that he is driven out (ἐξέβαλον αὐτόν) and nearly killed. In 6:11, the Pharisees are filled with rage because Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath. Later in the same chapter, Luke features Jesus as pronouncing a blessing on those

¹⁰⁰⁸ Hurtado, *How on Earth?*, 163–64.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.*

who are hated (μισήσωσιν, see John 15:19–25), socially ostracized (ἀφορίσωσιν),¹⁰¹¹ mocked (ὀνειδίσωσιν; see Matt 27:34=Mark 15:32), and put out (ἐκβάλωσιν, see John 9:34) for the sake of the Son of Man (6:22). In 11:49, in the middle of the woes on the Pharisees and lawyers, Jesus warned of the upcoming persecution and murder of prophets and apostles. The reaction of the scribes and Pharisees is presented four verses later, “[they] began to be very hostile toward him” (11:53). In 16:14, after Jesus taught about the proper use of money, the Pharisees ridiculed him for it (ἐξεμυκτήριζον). A similar episode appears between Jesus and the Pharisees in 20:19 wherein after the parable of the vineyard, the scribes and chief priests attempt to arrest him. Finally, in agreement with Matt 10:17 and Mark 13:9, Luke associates hostility toward Jewish Christians with the synagogue (12:11; 21:12).

The Synoptic evidence is consistent. There are clear references to Jesus being persecuted by the Jewish leaders. Moreover, the followers of Jesus are warned of similar persecution because of their confession of his name or association with him and this mistreatment of Jewish Christians is sourced in the synagogues.

2. Acts

In Acts,¹⁰¹² the text points to the existence of conflict between Jesus’ followers and “the Jews,”¹⁰¹³ and highlights the synagogues as a base for violent persecution of Jewish Christians.¹⁰¹⁴ Acts 6:9 is

¹⁰¹¹ This term appears 10 times in the NT with two meanings—(1) God setting apart a person for a mission (Acts 13:2; Rom 1:1; Gal 1:15) and (2) permanent separation from a certain community (Matt 13:49; 25:32; Luke 6:22; Acts 19:9; 2 Cor 6:17). The latter use appears in Gal 2:12 where Peter succumbs to the pressure from the Jewish Christians and disassociates himself from the Gentile Christians (2:11). Thus, in every occurrence of ἀφορίζω involving factions, the severance is permanent. Gal 2:12, however, is probably an exception because the text implies that Paul’s confrontation of Peter was successful, and therefore, we may assume that Peter reconvened with Gentile Christians, though this is not stated explicitly in the text.

¹⁰¹² On the historicity of Acts, see Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke-Acts in its Mediterranean Milieu*, NovTSup 107 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 197–217. F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: Historical Record or Theological Reconstruction?*, ed. W. Haase H. Temporini, 3 vols., ANRW 25.3 (New York: de Gruyter, 1989), 25.3:2569–2600; F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 27–34; Colin J. Hemer and Conrad H. Gempf, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, WUNT 49 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1989); Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM, 1979), 35–68. On Luke as the common author of Luke-Acts see, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, AB 28–28A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 35–53; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 49–51; Hengel, *Acts*, 66. On ca. 80–85 CE as the date of Acts, see Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 51–55. For a late date, ca. 130–160 CE, J.C. O’Neill, *The Theology of Acts in its Historical Setting* (London: SPCK, 1970), 46.

¹⁰¹³ Von Ernst Bammel, “Jewish Activity Against Christians in Palestine According to Acts,” in *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting: Palestinian Setting* ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 357–64.

¹⁰¹⁴ Dunn discusses the Jewish-Christian relations before the Jewish war and maintains, “Although the church and synagogue pulled apart in the Gentile mission, there is no indication of such a disruption within the Jewish mission” (320) and he appeals to Acts 21:20–21 for support. However, the passage

the first clear reference to a synagogue being at the center of Jewish-Christian disturbance in which an argument takes place between Stephen and the members of the synagogue of the freedmen.¹⁰¹⁵ The author's implication is that the disagreement occurred in a synagogue and ended in Stephen being confronted, seized, and brought before the Sanhedrin from the synagogue. The result of Stephen's trial before the Sanhedrin is the mob attack which results in Stephen's murder (7:54–8:1). In Acts 8:1–3; 9:2; 22:19; 26:9–11, Luke describes Paul's own persecution of the members of "the Way" whom he found in synagogues and homes; the text states that Paul inflicted his persecution by arresting, punishing, and forcing them to blaspheme Jesus.¹⁰¹⁶ The author of Acts uses the adverb *ἐν* in 9:1 (see also 22:4) to suggest that Paul repeatedly persecuted the "disciples of the Lord."¹⁰¹⁷

After Paul was converted, he experienced the same persecution from "the Jews" that he at one time inflicted on the Jewish Christians. According to Acts, this persecution of Paul took place in the context of the synagogue. In 13:45–50, we read that Paul arrived in Psidian Antioch and it is there that he preached in the synagogue until "the Jews" incited prominent women and men against him and drove him out of their district (v. 50). In Iconium Paul barely escaped stoning at the hands of "the Jews" (14:1–6). Paul's next stop was at Lystra where his stoning was instigated by "the Jews" (14:19). In 17:1–5, Paul and Silas arrived in Thessalonica and taught in the synagogue on Jesus being the Messiah (v. 3) until "the Jews" became jealous and formed a mob, dragged Paul's host Jason out of his home and beat him (vv. 5–9). The accusation against Jason was that he was welcoming political criminals who taught that there is a king other than Caesar (v. 7). The situation was resolved after Jason posted bail (v. 9) and Paul and Silas secretly escaped and fled to Berea (v. 10). In Berea, Paul and Silas preached successfully in the local synagogue (vv. 11–12) until "the Jews" came from Thessalonica and created the same commotion, forcing Paul to flee (vv. 13–14). In 18:17, there is a disturbance between "the Jews" and believers in Jesus involving a synagogue official, Sosthenes, who is physically assaulted. Thus, we can reasonably suppose that Paul's regular preaching in the synagogues (18:4) incited "the Jews" against him and those who were associated with him. The pattern in Paul's ministry is that "the Jews" follow him (14:19; 20:19) from city to city as he

Dunn cites focuses on the interaction between Paul and Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem not Jews who do not believe in Jesus. Moreover, the repeated theme in Acts is Jewish persecution of Paul and Jews who confessed Jesus as Messiah, which also contradicts Dunn's claim that prior to the Jewish war, "the Jews who believed Jesus to be the Messiah were apparently undisturbed (and even highly regarded)" (319). I see the evidence in Acts, will be noted below, as indicating the opposite of Dunn's conclusion. Dunn, "Let John be John," 319–20.

¹⁰¹⁵ Riesner argues that this was an actual synagogue and not merely a group gathering. Rainer Riesner, "Synagogues in Jerusalem," in *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting: Palestinian Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 204–6.

¹⁰¹⁶ Légasse makes a case that not all the data in Acts concerning Paul as persecutor is historically viable; nevertheless, he does not nullify the fact that synagogue was the principal venue where the persecution that *did* occur took place. Simon Légasse, "Paul's Pre-Christian Career According to Acts," in *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting: Palestinian Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 365–90, esp. 389.

¹⁰¹⁷ Bammel, "Jewish Activity Against Christians," 359 fn. 12.

journeyed toward Jerusalem (21:27–36; 24:10), and they incited violent hostility against Paul (9:23–25, 29; 22:18). The common theme in the above scenes is that the synagogue is the setting of friction between “the Jews” and Jesus’ followers.

There is additional evidence of persecution by “the Jews” in Acts though this persecution is not explicitly tied to a synagogue. In 4:3–21, persecution takes place in association with the Sanhedrin. Peter and John (3:11) were arrested and held in custody overnight (4:2), interrogated the following day and finally threatened (4:21), and released. The point of tension was the “name of Jesus” (vv. 7, 10, 17, 18) as the “rulers and elders and scribes” (v. 5) attempted to identify Peter and John with a specific movement or individual. There is a similar occurrence in 5:40, where we read that that the apostles were flogged and forbidden to speak “in the name of Jesus.” The narrator commented, however, that the apostles continued to preach Jesus as the Christ (5:42); this claim ties directly to the accusation against Jesus that is recorded in Matt 26:63–68, where Jesus is brought to trial and then executed on the charge of having claimed to be the Messiah. In Acts 12:2, Herod Antipas executed James in order to please “the Jews” (12:3), which echoes the narrative in Mark 15:15 and John 19:12–13 where Pilate orders Jesus’ crucifixion as a way to satisfy “the Jews.” In both executions, that of James’ and Jesus’, the instigation came from “the Jews.” Bammel summarized the conflict between “the Jews” and believers in Jesus in the book of Acts. He writes that believers in Jesus endured the following forms of persecution:

Searching of houses (8:3), ‘ὑποβάλλειν’ of witnesses (6:11), flogging (22:19), taking into custody (8:3; 22:19), fettering (9:21; 22:4), forced renunciation of the faith (26:11), tormenting (26:11), stoning by witnesses (7:58f.), application of lynch justice (9:1 φόνος) and the public display of agreement with such measures (8:1 συνευδοκεῖν), which is equally or possibly even more abhorrent than the rash action of a persecutor.¹⁰¹⁸

Though Bammel’s comments revolve around Pauline persecution in Acts, Bammel is not implying that Paul was the only instigator or that the Sanhedrin had to be compelled by Paul to act against Jewish Christians; Paul certainly had accomplices who shared his mission of suppression of Jewish Christians and who accompanied him to Damascus (Acts 9:7).¹⁰¹⁹ Nevertheless, as the narrator of Acts builds a case for early mistreatment of Jesus’ followers, he does place Paul at the center of that persecution in the early years. The next section will examine Pauline biographical statements in his writings for early anti-Christian activity.

3. Pauline Writings

This section will demonstrate that discussion of the persecution of Jesus’ followers in Paul’s letters is consistent with the narrative in Acts. In Gal 1:13–14 (also 1:23; 1 Cor 15:9), Paul says he “persecuted (ἐδίωκον) the church of God violently (ὑπερβολήν) and tried to destroy it” (ἐπόρθουν). Paul attributes

¹⁰¹⁸ Ibid., 360.

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibid., 361.

this treatment of the church to his extreme zeal for the traditions of the ancestors (περισσότερως ζηλωτής). Hengel sees ἐδίωκον and ἐπόρθουν as indicating brute force in line with the violence exerted by Antiochus Epiphanes against the Jewish people (4 Macc 4:23; 11:4).¹⁰²⁰ Légasse relies on Spicq to affirm that ἐπόρθουν even more so than ἐδίωκον includes violent action.¹⁰²¹ Spicq concludes, “this verb, not used in the Septuagint had, from Homer to the *koine*, the meaning: to create havoc, to ravage, to lay waste a city, to devastate an area.”¹⁰²² Based on Paul’s aggressive response to Jewish Christians, Hurtado writes, “Those against who Saul of Tarsus directed his zeal were engaging in some kind of behavior sufficiently outrageous and radical as to call for strong measures.”¹⁰²³ Hurtado also compares Paul to Phinehas who was enraged over immorality in Ancient Israel and dealt forcefully with the violators.¹⁰²⁴ In Phil 3:6, Paul recounts his pedigree to the Philippians and regretfully notes that he was a Pharisee with such zeal (ζήλος) that he persecuted (διώκων) the church. Hurtado sees early Pauline persecution as being chiefly a response to the Jesus-devotion of early Jewish Christians,¹⁰²⁵ which relates to John 16:2 where John attributes aggressive behavior against Jewish Christians to their association with Jesus. This verse is an allusion to Paul’s pattern of persecution in that he genuinely believed he was a faithful observer of the Torah while pursuing Jewish Christians.¹⁰²⁶ Hurtado summarizes, “the pre-Christian Paul himself becomes an important example of devout Jews being outraged by the Christological claims and practices of Jewish Christians.”¹⁰²⁷ Similarly, Bennema affirms that the debate between “the Jews” and Jesus in GJohn was essentially christological.¹⁰²⁸

Even though Paul is depicted as a chief aggressor of “the Way” in the book of Acts, he was not the only persecutor of believers in Jesus. In 1 Thess 2:14–16, Paul compares the persecution against the Thessalonians to the persecution of the Judean Christians. Paul writes:

For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you suffered the same things from your own compatriots as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out (ἐκδιώξαντων); they displease God and oppose (ἐναντίων)¹⁰²⁹ everyone

¹⁰²⁰ Martin Hengel and Roland Deines, *The pre-Christian Paul* (London: SCM, 1991), 71–72.

¹⁰²¹ Légasse, “Paul’s Pre-Christian Career According to Acts,” 365–90, 381.

¹⁰²² Ceslas Ernest Spicq, James D., “Πορθέω,” *TLNT*, 3:141.

¹⁰²³ Hurtado, *How on Earth?*, 169.

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid. See Barrett, *John*, 485; Torrey Seland, *Establishment Violence in Philo and Luke: A Study of Non-conformity to the Torah and Jewish Vigilante Reactions*, BIS 15 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 37–59.

¹⁰²⁵ Hurtado, *How on Earth?*, 171.

¹⁰²⁶ Barrett views John 16:2 and 11:50–52 as reflecting John’s irony. However, in light of Paul’s admission that his aggressive behavior was linked to his zeal for the traditions of the elders (Gal 1:13–14), I suggest it is appropriate to see John 16:2 as a foreshadow of the hostility in Acts and by Paul. Barrett, *John*, 485.

¹⁰²⁷ Hurtado, *How on Earth?*, 172.

¹⁰²⁸ Bennema, *Power*, 251.

¹⁰²⁹ This term appears 8 times in the NT. On three occasions it is used to describe a powerful wind (Matt 14:24=Mark 6:48; Acts 27:4); in Acts 26:9 it refers to Paul’s persecution of believers in Jesus;

by hindering (κωλύοντων) us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved.

The plural reference to churches of God in Judea indicates that the Jewish aggression against believers in Jesus was not an isolated event or limited to a specific region of the Roman Empire but rather the tension covered Christian communities that stretched from Jerusalem to Asia Minor.

This same experience can be seen in Gal 6:12 (also 5:11) where Paul refers to persecution for the sake of the cross of Christ by those who are forcing circumcision. Frequently, the aggression of “the Jews” against Christians turned violent. In 2 Cor 11:23–26, Paul refers to his own physical sufferings—imprisonments, floggings, five beatings with thirty-nine lashes (inflicted by “the Jews”), and three beating with rods—and attributes these hostilities to his ministry for the sake of Christ. What might have prompted such aggressive behavior by the Jewish authorities against Christians? An examination of the idea of confessing and cursing Jesus provides a possible explanation.

In 1 Cor 12:3, Paul indicates that affirmation of Jesus as Lord is the converse of saying, “let Jesus be cursed” (Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς). In the only other use of ἀνάθεμα in the Corinthian letters, Paul directs a curse against the one who cursed Jesus when he writes in 12:3: “if anyone does not love (φιλέω) the Lord, let him be accursed (ἀνάθεμα)” (1 Cor 16:22). The response to Jesus takes one of two forms, affection or cursing. There is no shortage of scholars who have argued that Paul is countering a Jewish curse against Jesus, Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς.¹⁰³⁰ Justin (*Dial.* 47:4; 95:4; 108:3; 133:6; *I Apol.* 31) and Pliny (*Ep.* 10.96) attest that Christians do not pronounce Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς. Thus, for the early Christians, confessing or cursing Jesus became a distinguishing mark of those who followed Jesus and those who rejected him. The term ἀνάθεμα appears in the LXX and refers to something “delivered up to divine wrath, dedicated to destruction and brought under a curse.”¹⁰³¹ Behm notes that most likely, “the controlling thought here is that of the delivering up to the judicial wrath of God of one who ought to be ἀνάθεμα because of his sin.”¹⁰³² In fact, Paul hypothetically applies the curse to himself in Rom 9:3 when he expresses his zeal for the salvation of his fellow Jews to the point of being willing to be cursed (ἀνάθεμα), that is, separated from Christ (εἶναι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ),

in Acts 28:17 and Titus 2:8 to adversarial behavior. The last mention is in Mark 15:39, referring to the centurion who stood opposite Jesus’ cross, which is probably a spatial reference since the centurion provides an affirming testimony about Jesus rather than being depicted as his adversary. Thayer defines it as facing an adversary, hostility, and antagonism in a feeling or an act. “ἐναντῖος,” in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, ed. Carl Ludwig Wilibald Grimm, Thayer, Joseph Henry, Wilke, Christian Gottlob (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1898), 213

¹⁰³⁰ J. M. Bassler, “1 Cor. 12:3—Curse and Confession in Context,” *JBL* 101 (1982): 415–18; J. D. M. Derrett, “Cursing Jesus (1 Cor. XII.3): The Jews as Religious ‘Persecutors’,” *NTS* 21 (1975): 544–54; William Horbury, “The Benediction of the ‘Minim’ and Early Jewish-Christian Heresy,” *JTS* 33 no. 1 (April 1982): 53–54; Vernon H. Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions* 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963), 44, 63–64, 101. Cf. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 578–82.

¹⁰³¹ Behm, “Ἀνάθεμα,” *TDNT*, 354. See Deissmann, *Light*, 95–96.

¹⁰³² Behm, “Ἀνάθεμα,” 354–55.

if it would bring about their salvation. For Paul, cursing meant separation, which is consistent with the early Jewish polemic by which Jesus was considered cursed by God for his blasphemy (Matt 26:63–66; 27:43, 46), and consequently his death was sanctioned by Deut 13:1–5 and 18:20 (see also Gal 3:13). If Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς was a curse formula by Jews against believers in Jesus, then it is plausible to understand the confession of Jesus as Messiah (e.g., John 9:22; 12:42) as a point of conflict between early Jewish Christians and “the Jews.” Hurtado posits, “Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς is probably an outraged Jewish reaction against what were seen as blasphemous Christological claims and utterly inappropriate cultic devotion to Jesus.”¹⁰³³ Therefore, I suggest that the notions of cursing Jesus and confessing Jesus are pivotal to a proper understanding of the environment of conflict that existed between Jews and Jewish Christians in GJohn. In light of the evidence from Acts and Pauline literature, it is reasonable to view the Johannine statements in John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2 as accurately conveying the socio-religious experience of the readers of GJohn, in which they are characterized as fearing the Jewish leadership because of their confession of Jesus as Messiah.¹⁰³⁴

4. Summary

In reference to the evidence in the SG, Pauline writings, and Acts, Hurtado claims that, “There is evidence pointing to, and evidence from, the decades earlier than the Gospel of John, indicating sharp conflicts between Jewish Christians and other devout Jews over devotion to Jesus.”¹⁰³⁵ Therefore, from the other NT evidence we can extrapolate that the setting of GJohn reflects tension between “the Jews” and the world who are in opposition to Jesus and his followers.

¹⁰³³ Hurtado, *How on Earth?*, 177.

¹⁰³⁴ Bennema succinctly states: “The intra-Jewish conflict between early Christianity and late Second Temple Judaism was rooted in the person and teachings of Jesus.” Cornelis Bennema, “Early Christian Identity Formation amidst Conflict,” *JECH* 5 no. 1 (2015): 33.

¹⁰³⁵ Hurtado, *How on Earth?*, 153.

APPENDIX C: (ETERNAL) LIFE IN GJOHN

In the chart below I list all of the mentions of life/eternal life (EL) in GJohn. Moreover, the chart provides the context of the term and the familial terms within the context that demonstrates that life/EL is to be interpreted within the divine family motif. The verses listed in the parenthesis are provided only when the related theme under discussion is not explicitly referred in the same verse where life/EL appears. For example, in 1:4, life/EL is juxtaposed with the Logos by the familial context is derived from 1:14 and 18 where the Logos is mentioned alongside the Son and the Father. This chart supplements my study of life/EL in §2.2.2.

Passage	Term	Thematic Element	Family Theme
1:4a	ζωή	Life is in the Logos	See context (vv. 14, 18)
1:4b	ζωή	Life was the light of men	See context (vv. 14, 18)
3:15	αἰώνιος ζωή	EL for the believer in the Son of Man	Son of Man
3:16	αἰώνιος ζωή	Does not perish, has EL	Only Son
3:36a	αἰώνιος ζωή	Has EL	Son of God God, Father, Son
3:36b	ζωή	Non-believing will not see life; God's wrath remains	Son appears twice
4:10	ὕδωρ ζῶν	Living water	Father (vv. 21, 23)
4:11	ὕδωρ ζῶν	Living water	Father (vv. 21, 23)
4:14	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	Spring welling up to EL	Father (vv. 21, 23)
4:36	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	Reaps rewards and gathers fruit for EL	See context (vv. 21–24, 34)
50, 51, 53	ζῆ	Physical life	NA
5:21a	ζωοποιεῖ	The Father gives life	Father
5:21b	ζωοποιεῖ	The Son gives life	Son
5:24	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	Has EL	See context (vv. 19–47)
5:24	τὴν ζωὴν	Transferred from death to life	See context (vv. 19–47)
5:25	ζήσουσιν	Those who hear will live	See context (vv. 19–47)
5:26	ζωὴν	Father has life in himself	Father
5:26b	ζωὴν	He gave the son to have life in himself	Son, Son of Man (v. 27)
5:29	ἀνάστασιν ζωῆς	Will come out to the Resurrection of life	See context (vv. 19–47)
5:39	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	Search the Scriptures, in them you have EL	Father (vv. 36, 37)
5:40	ζωὴν	Refuse to come to me that you may have life	Father (vv. 43, 45)
6:27	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	Food that remains to EL	God the Father
6:33	ζωὴν	Gives life to the world	My father (v. 32)
6:35	ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς	The bread of life	Father (v. 37)
6:40	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	Who sees and believes has EL and I will raise him on the last day	My father (v. 40)
6:47	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	The one who believes has EL	Father (vv. 44, 45, 46, 46)
6:48	ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς	I am the bread of life	See context

Passage	Term	Thematic Element	Family Theme
6:51	ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ζῶν	The living bread	See context
6:51	ζήσκει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα	If anyone should eat this bread, will live forever	See context
6:51	τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς	The life of the world	See context
6:53	ζωήν	Unless you eat flesh of the Son of Man, you do not have life in yourselves	See context
6:54	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	The one who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood has EL	See context
6:57	ὁ ζῶν πατήρ	Living Father sent me	Father 2x
6:57	ζῶ	I live because of the Father	Father 2x
6:57	ζήσκει	Will live through me	See context
6:58	ζήσκει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα	Who eats this bread will live forever	See context
6:63	τὸ ζωοποιεῖν	The Spirit gives life	See context
6:63	ζωή	My words that I spoke to you are spirit and life	Father (v. 65)
6:68	ζωῆς αἰωνίου	You have words of EL	See context
7:38	ῥέοντος ζῶντος	Rivers of living water	See context
8:12	τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς	Will have the light of the life	Father (vv. 18, 19)
10:10	ζωήν	I have come so they may have life, abundantly	Father (vv. 15, 17, 18)
10:28	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	I give them EL and they will never perish	Father (vv. 25, 29, 30, 32, 36, 37, 37, 38) Son of God (v. 36)
11:25a	ζωή	I am the resurrection and the life	See context
11:25b	ζήσεται	If he should die, he will live	See context
11:26	ὁ ζῶν	The one living...will never die	Son of God (v. 27)
12:25	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	Those who hate their life will keep it for EL	Father (v. 26)
12:50	ζωὴ αἰωνίου	His command is EL	Father (vv. 49, 50)
14:6	ἡ ζωή	I am the life	Father (vv. 7, 8, 9–2x, 10–3x, 11, 12, 13)
14:19	ζῶ καὶ ὑμεῖς ζήσετε	Because I live, you will live	Father (vv. 15, 20, 21, 23, 24)
17:2	ζωὴν αἰώνιον	To give EL	Father (vv. 1, 5, etc.) Son (v. 1)
17:3	ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή	This is EL that they may know...	See context
20:31	ζωήν	May have life in his name	Son of God (v. 31)

APPENDIX D: ΑΠΟΣΤΕΛΛΩ AND ΠΕΜΠΩ IN GJOHN

The following table lists every appearance of ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω in GJohn as they are the two Johannine verbs that develop the sending motif in the Gospel.¹⁰³⁶ Both verbs describe the Father's act of sending his Son.¹⁰³⁷ John employs both verbs interchangeably. I have also included appearances of ἐρχομαι because the notion of "sending" is implied in the broader context of this verb.¹⁰³⁸ The columns denoting the verses that refer to the Father, God, and the Son are meant to provide a snapshot of the distribution of these three terms in juxtaposition to the main verbs for sending—ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω.

Text	ἀποστέλλω	πέμπω	[ἐξ]έρχομαι	δίδωμι	Father	God	Son	Spirit
1:9, 11			X					
3:16, 17	X			X		X	X	
3:31			X					
3:34	X					X		
4:34		X						
5:23, 24, 30, 37		X			X		X	
5:36, 38	X				X			
5:43			X		X			
6:29	X					X		
6:32, 33				X	X	X		

¹⁰³⁶ The use of δίδωμι in John 3:16 also contributes to the sending motif; the immediate use of ἀποστέλλω in the next verse confirms this suggestion.

¹⁰³⁷ Meyer provides a helpful insight when he writes, "What does appear to be consistent is the formulaic use of the definite singular active participle, always aorist, ὁ πέμψας με/αὐτόν ('the one who has sent me/him'). In this formula God is always the antecedent of the participle, the subject of the ending, and aside from the one use of the formula by John the Baptist in 1:33, Jesus is always the direct object of the participle. The formula can be combined with 'Father' ('the Father who has sent me') but more often it stands alone as an epithet for God. It never occurs absolutely (i.e., without a direct object, as though simply 'the Sender'). In sum, the point in counting these verb forms is that nowhere in the Fourth Gospel is Jesus ever called the 'Envoy' or 'Emissary' or 'one sent [ἀπεσταλμένος] by God'; only John the Baptist is. There is not so much a *Gesandtenchristologie* in the Gospel as there is a *Sendertheologie*...The language of 'sending' is theological language that undergirds Christology but refuses to be absorbed into it....What is more significant for our purposes is that, while 'the Father' and 'God' easily and frequently alternate with each other, the formulaic epithet of sending, 'the Father who has sent me' or simply 'the one who has sent me,' belongs strictly to the 'Father'—language of the Gospel and with only two exceptions is not even associated with 'God' (ὁ θεός). Thus 'the Father' and 'God' function in many ways synonymously, even though the former is more frequent; 'God' and 'Father' identify the source from which Jesus has 'come' into the world and the goal to which he is 'going' or 'ascending'; they identify the origin of what Jesus says, of what he does, of the disciples he gathers. But it is the formulaic identification of the 'Father' as 'the one who has sent me' that gives this 'presentation of God' its most characteristically Johannine nuance." Paul W. Meyer, "The Presentation of God in the Fourth Gospel," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. D. Moody Smith, R. Alan Culpepper, and Clifton C. Black (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 264.

¹⁰³⁸ Josef Kuhl, *Die Sendung Jesu und der Kirche nach dem Johannes-Evangelium* (St. Augustin: Steyler, 1967), 53–57.

Text	ἀποστέλλω	πέμπω	[ἐξ]έρχομαι	δίδωμι	Father	God	Son	Spirit
6:38, 39		X						
6:44		X			X			
6:57	X				X			
7:28			X					
7:29, 32	X							
8:14			X					
8:16, 18		X			X			
8:26–29		X						
8:42	X		X		X	X		
9:4		X				X		
9:39			X					
10:10			X					
10:36–38	X				X	X	X	
11:27			X			X	X	
11:40–42	X				X			
12:13, 15			X					
12:27			X		X			
12:44, 45, 46, 47, 49		X	X		X			
13:3			X			X		
13:20		X						
14:24		X			X			
15:21, 22, 26		X	X		X			X
16:5, 27, 28, 30		X	X		X	X		
17:1, 3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25	X		X		X	X	X	
18:37			X					
20:21	X	X			X			

APPENDIX E: ΜΕΝΩ IN GJOHN

The chart below provides the literal and symbolic uses of μένω in GJohn.¹⁰³⁹

Reference	Context/Text
Literal	
1:38 μένεις, 39 μένει... ἔμειναν; 2:12 ἔμειναν; 4:40 μεῖναι...ἔμεινεν; 7:9 ἔμεινεν; 10:40 ἔμεινεν; 11:6 ἔμεινεν, 11:54 ἔμεινεν	Staying at a physical location
8:35 (2x) μένει	The Son and slave analogy for temporary versus permanent residence in a house
12:24 μένει	The seed remains alive and does not produce fruit
12:34 μένει	The Messiah remains forever
14:25 μένων	Jesus taught while being with his disciples
19:31 μὴ μείνῃ	The bodies must not remain on the cross
21:22–23 μένειν (2x)	The BD will stay alive until Jesus returns
Symbolic	
1:32–33 ἔμεινεν...μένον	The Spirit remained on Jesus
3:36 μένει	The wrath of God abides on whoever does not believe and obey the Son
5:38 μένοντα	The Father's word does not abide in them
6:27 μένουσαν	The food remains unto eternal life
6:56 μένει	To eat his flesh and drink his blood is to remain in him
8:31 μείνητε	Continuing in his word confirms true discipleship
9:41 μένει	Claiming spiritual sight while rejecting Jesus is to remain in sin
12:46 μείνη	The one who believes in Jesus...does not remain in darkness
14:2 μοναί	Many dwellings in the Father's house
14:10 μένων	The Father abides in the Son and accomplishes the works through him
14:17–23 μένει, μονήν	Mutual abiding of the Father, the Son, the Spirit, with the believer
15:4–10 μείνατε, μὴ μείνη, μὴ ἐν ἐμοὶ μείνητε, ὁ μένων ἐν ἐμοί, ἐὰν μὴ τις μείνη ἐν ἐμοί, ἐὰν μείνητε ἐν ἐμοί καὶ τὰ ῥήματά μου ἐν ὑμῖν μείνη, μείνατε ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ τῇ ἐμῇ, μένω αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ	Remain in me, remain in the vine, my words remain in you, remain in my love, I remain in his love
15:16 μένη	The fruit remains

¹⁰³⁹ Mary Coloe has argued for an understanding of μένω within a household setting and thereby she has integrated certain passages with the literal meaning into her discussion about abiding with a symbolic meaning. For example, in John 1:38 she sees the question posed to Jesus by the two disciples of John the Baptist, “where are you abiding?” and the subsequent comment by the narrator in John 1:39, “they stayed with him that day” as contributing to the Evangelist’s argument that “dwelling with Jesus is the first and primary activity of disciples” (146). She similarly sees Jesus’ two day stay in Samaria as confirming the Johannine theology of immanence. She reasons, “The faith of disciples is expressed by their being drawn into the place where Jesus dwells (1:39), and Jesus responds to the faith of the Samaritans by dwelling with them (4:40)” (146). Although one could potentially see a symbolic meaning behind those terms in these passages, I suggest it is more natural to read the narrative text as providing a historical statement rather than a theological declaration. Coloe, *Dwelling*, 145–66.

APPENDIX F: PARTICIPATION IN JESUS' MISSION

In this section, I discuss the disciples' participation in the mission of Jesus as evidence of membership in the divine family. In continuing Jesus' mission, the disciples imitate Jesus' fulfillment of the mission that was entrusted to him by the Father. John introduces the Son in 1:18 with an immediate focus on the Son's responsibility to be a witness for the Father (1:18; 3:11); therefore, the sending motif should be understood in light of the family imagery. Ashton remarks that these two themes—the sending motif and family imagery—are captured in GJohn in two expressions that Jesus employs to refer to God—"Father" and "the one who sent me."¹⁰⁴⁰ Indeed, the coupling of the sending motif with sonship is a distinctively Johannine phenomenon. Since these two concepts are joined in GJohn, I will investigate the sending motif in the context of family imagery.¹⁰⁴¹ The study below examines Jesus as God's agent and the implications this has for the disciples in regard to their function as Jesus' agents.

1. Jesus as God's Agent

The coupling of the sending motif with sonship is a distinctively Johannine phenomenon.¹⁰⁴² John deploys two primary terms to describe the Father sending the Son as an agent of the Father—ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω¹⁰⁴³—with no apparent difference in meaning.¹⁰⁴⁴ The sending motif becomes

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ashton, *Understanding*, 220. Anderson suggests that God is described at least 25 times in John not as being but as doing, and his most important act is the sending of the Son. Paul N. Anderson, "The Having-Sent-Me Father: Aspects of Agency, Encounter, and Irony in the Johannine Father-Son Relationship," *Semeia* 85 (1999): 35.

¹⁰⁴¹ The sending motif is always coupled with the Johannine motif of Jesus' sonship from the Father (see 3:17, 34–36; 4:21–24, 34; 5:18–47; 6:27–65, 57; 8:12–59; 10:36; 11:41–42; 12:44–50; 14:24, 26; 15:21–27; 16:1–5; 17:1–8, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20:21). Although 13:20 does not explicitly refer to sonship, it is observable in the context of 13:1–3. Only in 7:16–17; 9:3–4 God is designated as the sender of Jesus instead of the Father as the sender of the Son.

¹⁰⁴² The sending leitmotif dominates the narrative in GJohn in contrast with the SG. Matthew contains three references to God sending Jesus (Matt 10:40=Mark 9:37=Luke 9:48; Matt 15:24; Matt 21:37=Mark 12:6=Luke 20:13). Mark's only two references are parallel to Matt and Luke. In addition to the parallel passages already noted, Luke contains two references (Luke 4:43; 10:16). None of the Synoptic sending passages refer to the sonship of Jesus or the fatherhood of God. Therefore, the association of the sending leitmotif with the Father-Son theme is peculiar to GJohn.

¹⁰⁴³ The sending motif is featured with the verbs πέμπω (32 times) and ἀποστέλλω (28 times). See appendix D for every occurrence of these verbs in GJohn. John also uses ἐρχομαι and δίδωμι to identify Jesus as coming from God. Since both of these terms appear in proximity to ἀποστέλλω and/or πέμπω in their respective contexts, or there is clear thematic overlap with Jesus' sending by God, I will not examine these terms beyond listing them in appendix D.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Köstenberger, *Missions*, 97–102; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Jesus in the Gospels: A Biblical Christology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 249. Rengstorff attempts to make a distinction when he says, "He [John] uses πέμπειν as well in such a way that there is no self-evident distinction. Closer investigation, however, shows us that when the Johannine Jesus uses πέμπειν in speaking of His sending by God, He does so in such a way as to speak of God as the πέμψας με. This usage is wholly restricted to God, being sometimes amplified to ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ; when speaking of Himself He uses other forms of πέμπειν. Except on the lips of Jesus the formula occurs only once,

central not only to our understanding of the God-Jesus relationship as Father and Son, but also to our understanding of the Johannine presentation of the disciples who would become children of God and who would be incorporated into Jesus' mission. Meeks has argued that the descent-ascent motif accentuates Jesus' alienation from "the Jews," and instead links him closer to God and the Johannine sectarian community.¹⁰⁴⁵ Anderson views the prophetic ministry of Moses as the background to the sending motif and that the sending motif makes Jesus' messianic mission legitimate.¹⁰⁴⁶ Humble has recently argued that the descent-ascent theme is a unifying leitmotif of the entire structure of GJohn that guides the reader to "a fuller understanding of the Evangelist's Christology of Jesus-Son's origin, identity, authority, and relationship to his Father."¹⁰⁴⁷ For my purposes here, I examine the sending of Jesus by the Father as paradigmatic for Jesus' sending of the disciples as his agents to continue his mission.

While indicating a Father-Son relationship between Jesus and the Father, John conveys that the purpose of Jesus' mission is to reveal God to the world for the sake of the Father's glory. Jesus' role as God's agent is tied to the specific work (ἔργον)¹⁰⁴⁸ that has been delegated to him by the

namely, in 1:33 on the lips of the Baptist (ὁ πέμψας με βαπτίζειν ἐν ὕδατι...). Of the 33 πέμπειν passages in Jn., apart from the last mentioned no less than 26 fall into this category. As against this, in Jn. God is never called ὁ ἀπέστειλας με, but whenever ἀπέστειλεν is used of the sending of Jesus by God it occurs in a statement." Rengstorf, "Αποστέλλω," *TDNT*, 1:404. However, Fennema has shown that the difference between the verbs is not in the inherent meaning but in grammar, i.e., finite verbs vs participial usage. David A. Fennema, "Jesus and God according to John: An Analysis of the Fourth Gospel's Father/Son Christology" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1979), 2–5. Similary Willett, *Wisdom*, 59.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Meeks writes, "Our analysis of the function of this motif and its related components within the literary structure of the Gospel suggests an interpretation diametrically opposed [to the idea that the ascent-descent motif accents unity]: in every instance the motif points to contrast, foreignness, division, judgment. Only within that dominant structure of estrangement and difference is developed the counterpoint of unity—between God and Christ, between God, Christ, and the small group of the faithful" (67). He continues, "As we have seen, the depiction of Jesus as the man 'who comes down from heaven' marks him as the alien from all men of the world. Though the Jews are 'his own,' when he comes to them they reject him, thus revealing themselves as not his own after all but his enemies; not from God, but from the devil, from 'below,' from 'this world.' The story describes the progressive alienation of Jesus from the Jews. But something else is happening, for there are some few who do respond to Jesus' signs and words, and these, while they also frequently 'misunderstand,' are progressively enlightened and drawn into intense intimacy with Jesus, until they, like him, are not 'of this world'" (69). Meeks, "Man from Heaven."

¹⁰⁴⁶ Anderson, "The Having-Sent-Me Father," 32–57.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Susan E. Humble, *A Divine Round Trip: The Literary and Christological Function of the Descent/Ascent Leitmotif in the Gospel of John* (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 10, see also 45–49. Humble argues that the descent/ascent leitmotif is buttressed by the christological titles (e.g., teacher, Lord), Jesus' ἐγὼ εἰμί statements, Jesus' signs and works, and the Johannine themes of oneness, abiding, eternal life, crucifixion, glory, and resurrection. Although Humble provide a compelling case for the literary unity of GJohn around the leitmotif of descent/ascent, she does not connect her argument to discipleship or the benefits promised to the disciples, even though discipleship is included in John's purpose statement (20:30–31).

¹⁰⁴⁸ In presenting Jesus' works, John employs the plural τὰ ἔργα and the singular τὸ ἔργον. Both the singular and plural references signify Jesus' works during his ministry but the distinction occurs in

Father¹⁰⁴⁹—to tell the story of God.¹⁰⁵⁰ The prologue of GJohn ends with the following words: “No one has ever seen God. It is the unique God, who is close to the Father’s heart, he has made him known” (1:18; 5:20; 8:38, 40; 12:50; 14:8–9). The rest of the gospel focuses on Jesus as God’s representative by depicting Jesus’ self-awareness of his mission as being inseparable from the work for which God sent him (4:34; 5:36; 9:4; 10:32–42; 14:7–12; 17:4).¹⁰⁵¹ The climax of the sending motif is seen through the inclusio in John 17:6, 26 where Jesus is featured as having accomplished the work assigned to him by the Father, which reassures the reader that the mission declared in 1:18 has been fulfilled. Moreover, by fulfilling the work of making the Father known (vv. 4–6) by declaring God’s words (vv. 8, 14), the Son glorified the Father (v. 4). According to Carter, God’s presence and purposes are made known in “Jesus’ words, works, interactions, and conflicts. Jesus descends from heaven, God’s abode, accomplishes his revelatory mission, and ascends to God.”¹⁰⁵² Thus, Carter rightly describes Jesus as “the agent of God’s purposes.”¹⁰⁵³ The fact that John presents Jesus as both the Father’s agent and the Father’s Son serves to bolster John’s portrayal of Jesus’ mission on earth in the context of family imagery; for Jesus relates to the Father on two levels—as a family member and as an envoy. Culpepper says it aptly, “Jesus is supremely the Father’s emissary fulfilling the Father’s will.”¹⁰⁵⁴ In the end, John’s references to the filial relationship between God and Jesus serve to present Jesus’ fulfillment of the mission in the light of the theme of family imagery.

John defends Jesus as God’s agent by linking that claim to Jesus’ work(s). In 5:17 and 36, Jesus defends himself from the antagonism of “the Jews” for two offenses—violating the Sabbath and calling God his own Father (5:18). Jesus responds by linking the work that he performed in front of them (5:36) to his claim that he was sent by God. He says, “For the works that the Father has given me to complete, these very works that I am doing testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me” (5:36). In 10:22–39, Jesus’ unity with his Father is evident in Jesus’ fulfillment of God’s work. This

that his works propel him toward the final and perfect work that is accomplished on the cross. Moloney summarizes the interrelationship between the singular and the plural sayings as follows, “[Jesus was] bringing to perfection (τελειόω) the work (τὸ ἔργον) that the Father asked him to do (4:34), through the steady accomplishment (τελειόω) during his ministry of the works (τὰ ἔργα) that manifest his authority as the Sent One of God (5:36).” Moloney, *Love*, 50.

¹⁰⁴⁹ For a study of Jesus’ works in GJohn, refer to Peter W. Ensor, *Jesus and His Works: The Johannine Sayings in Historical Perspective*, WUNT 2.85 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996). Ensor concludes that the works of Jesus are meant to confirm his claim to be Son of God and functioned as “external evidence for his total and eternal unity with God.” Ibid., 289–90.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Moloney, *Love*, xi. Similarly Lincoln, *Truth*, 159–82.

¹⁰⁵¹ Moloney selects only three passages to support Jesus’ mission as being accomplished in fulfilling the work of God—John 4:34; 5:36; 17:4 because only these three passages associate “work” (ἔργον) with “accomplish/perfect” (τελειόω). I concur that those three passages are critical to moving the motif of accomplishing the mission of God in GJohn; however, the two additional passages I note above do not detract from this motif, but rather, expand the discussion of the agency motif as expressed in Jesus’ work on this earth. Moloney, *Love*, 39–54.

¹⁰⁵² Warren Carter, *John: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 52.

¹⁰⁵³ Ibid., 57.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 109.

conversation occurs at the feast of the Dedication at which Jesus' identity is the reason for the conflict between him and "the Jews." He aggravates "the Jews" by alleging to be "one with the Father" (10:30), which "the Jews" interpret as a blasphemous claim to divinity (10:33) and respond with violence against him (10:31, 39). Jesus responds by referring back to his mission that is manifested in his works that support his assertion that "the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (10:38). His argument rests on his contention that the Father sanctified and sent him into this world (10:36) to give eternal life to those who believe in him (3:16–17; 10:26–27). Once again, Jesus' response focuses on his mission delegated to him by his Father, a mission that is made evident through his works (10:36–38) which affirm that the Father and Jesus have a unified purpose (10:30, 38) and that Jesus is the Father's emissary. This oneness motif—which is always connected to the concept of sending (10:30, 38 with verse 36; 14:10–11, 20 with verse 24; 17:8 with verses 11, 21, 22, and 23)—also highlights the Father-Son intimacy and reinforces John's presentation of Jesus as the agent of the Father.¹⁰⁵⁵ In 14:7–12 Jesus defends his origin to his disciples by also pointing to his works. In verse 8, Philip asks Jesus to see the Father. In response to Philip, Jesus is portrayed as reaffirming his unity with the Father which is supported by his works (14:10, 12). In 15:24, the brief reference to Jesus' works reaffirms that his works were unique and that they stem from his relationship with his Father (15:10–11).

John's presentation of Jesus as God's agent includes an emphasis on Jesus' commitment to the Father's mission. In 4:34, Jesus explains to his disciples the purpose for his mission as follows—"My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to complete his work." In 10:17 we see that Jesus' commitment to the Father's mission was even unto death. At the same time, in 9:4–5, we see that Jesus' time on earth to do God's work was limited: "We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one will be able to work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." In this scene, Jesus notices a blind man and comments to his disciples that it is his responsibility to heal this man. Rather than answering his disciples' question of why this man was blind (9:2), Jesus responded by redirecting the narrative to the theme of staying devoted to his Father's mission, and thereby heightening the union between mission and work in GJohn. This same commitment to the mission of Jesus is expected of the disciples as Jesus' agents.

2. The Disciples as Agents of Jesus

John's presentation of Jesus as God's agent serves as a paradigm for the service that is expected of Jesus' followers as his agents (e.g., 4:38; 13:20; 14:12; 15:8, 16, 27; 17:18; 20:21).¹⁰⁵⁶ Müller synthesizes the relationship between Jesus and his disciples as finding its "visible expression in the world in the manner of their [disciples'] service...The essence of discipleship lies in the disciple's

¹⁰⁵⁵ Schnackenburg, *Jesus*, 258.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Köstenberger shows that the terms "go," "send," "appoint," and "works" all have the mission connotation in GJohn. Köstenberger, *Missions*, 184–85.

fulfillment of his duty to be a witness to his Lord in his entire life.”¹⁰⁵⁷ In 15:27, Jesus assigns the task of witnessing to his disciples because they were with him from the beginning. Klink observes the importance of the mission motif to the entire Gospel and to the work of Jesus and his disciples when he writes, “The entire Gospel, from start to finish, tells a story centered on the mission of the Son, a mission that the readers are invited to join.”¹⁰⁵⁸ The disciples are not duplicating his mission (e.g., 14:12), but rather Jesus’ mission is paradigmatic for the mission of his disciples.¹⁰⁵⁹ Brown observes:

The special Johannine contribution to the theology of this mission is that the Father’s sending of the Son serves as the model and the ground for the Son’s sending of the disciples. Their mission is to continue the Son’s mission; and this requires that the Son must be present to them during this mission, just as the Father had to be present to the Son during his mission.¹⁰⁶⁰

Köstenberger equates the concept of discipleship with disciples’ mission when he writes:

The Fourth Gospel does not dichotomize between ‘discipleship’ on the one hand and... ‘missions’ on the other. Those who follow Jesus closely are at the end commissioned to be sent into the world... a person’s ‘discipleship’ includes and entails that person’s mission to the world.¹⁰⁶¹

The correlation between the missions of Jesus and the disciples is evident in the similarity of the work and consecration to this work.

First, the disciples are assigned to a specific task that is similar to Jesus’ task. In 4:38, John integrates the disciples into Jesus’ mission by focusing entirely on the work that they are expected to fulfill—“I sent¹⁰⁶² you to reap where you have not labored. Others have labored and you have entered into their labor.”¹⁰⁶³ While Jesus invites his disciples to participate in his mission, the Samaritan woman illustrates what it means to be a witness for Jesus by inviting her villagers to meet Jesus (4:28–30, 39–42; see §2.2.2.3b). The mission of the disciples was to invite others to believe in Jesus as the agent of God (17:8, 20–22, 23, 25). Hays rightly points out that the charge to go and bear fruit in 15:16 is “the language of *mission*; it suggests that this is a commission for the disciples to go out into

¹⁰⁵⁷ D. Müller, “Disciple,” *NIDNTT*, 1:490.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Klink, *Sheep*, 238.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Köstenberger argues that 4:38; 14:12; 15:8, 16 all refer to the disciples’ being sent because of the references to fruit, works, sending, entering into labor, and appointment. Simultaneously, Köstenberger observes that although in the above passages the disciples’ mission is partially addressed, it is not fully focused on until 17:18; 20:21. Köstenberger, *Missions*, 171–75, 180–85.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Brown, *John*, 1036.

¹⁰⁶¹ Köstenberger, *Missions*, 177.

¹⁰⁶² There is a textual variant with the verb ἀποστέλλω; NA27 and UBS4 choose the aorist even though **8** and **D** contain ἀπεσταλκα. The perfect tense is parallel to the perfect verbs in the subsequent clauses (ἄλλοι κεκοπιάκασιν καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰς τὸν κόπον αὐτῶν εἰσεληλύθατε). The meaning of the text is not affected by the textual variant between the aorist and the perfect.

¹⁰⁶³ Beck argues that in the context only Jesus and the Samaritan woman have been laboring. Yet, the plural ἄλλοι implies Jesus has more than the woman in mind. So it is appropriate to understand the “others” as Jesus, John the Baptist (3:23–30; 4:1), and the Samaritan woman. Beck, *Discipleship*, 76–77. For other suggestions see Bernard et al., *John*, 2:380. Brown, *John*, 184; Köstenberger, *Missions*, 182–83.

the world and testify to the words that Jesus brought to them (15:7).”¹⁰⁶⁴ The link between mission and Jesus’ word is made clear in 17:14–19 where the word that Jesus gave to the disciples becomes the cause of the world’s hatred (also 15:18–22), nonetheless Jesus still sends his followers into the world (17:18). The result of fulfilling their mission is that the disciples will perform “greater works” than Jesus.

Second, the disciples are consecrated to the mission as Jesus was consecrated. The mission is explained by John as follows:

17:18—καθὼς ἐμὲ ἀπέστειλας εἰς τὸν κόσμον, καὶ γὰρ ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν κόσμον

20:21—καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὰρ πέμπω ὑμᾶς

Köstenberger arguably overstates the distinction between these two passages when he says that 17:18 speaks of the process of sending (εἰς τὸν κόσμον), while 20:21 features the sender/sent relationships since Jesus is mentioned as the sender.¹⁰⁶⁵ Admittedly, 20:21 does not mention the world as the mission destination εἰς τὸν κόσμον; however, not every statement in GJohn concerning Jesus’ sending by the Father mentions the world (e.g., 5:36, 38; 8:42).¹⁰⁶⁶ However, there is more parallelism between the two passages than Köstenberger denotes. Both passages mention of the opposition to the disciples (17:14; 20:19), the Father’s role in sending Jesus, and Jesus’ role in sending the disciples.¹⁰⁶⁷ Thus, I suggest that it is more appropriate to view 20:21 as a re-commissioning of fearful disciples with the repeated promise of the Spirit and peace (14:25–27; 16:7–11; 20:22) who will partner with the disciples in convicting individuals of sin (16:7–9; 20:23).

The sending formula in 17:18 and 20:21 draws a parallel between Jesus and the disciples being sent through the adverb καθὼς. First, the formula, καθὼς + ἐμέ/με + καὶ γὰρ + αὐτοὺς/ὑμᾶς, implies that the sending is comparable to Jesus’ sending by the Father and it provides the basis for the sending.¹⁰⁶⁸ Köstenberger summarizes additional corresponding concepts between Jesus and his disciples through the adverb καθὼς—life (6:57), knowledge (10:14–15), love (15:9, 17:23), and unity (17:22).¹⁰⁶⁹ He rightly cautions against interpreting the adverb as asserting exact parallelism between Jesus and the disciples in every category of the use of καθὼς. Köstenberger refers to 17:16, “They are not of the world just as I am not of this world,” as an example where the parallelism should not be

¹⁰⁶⁴ Hays, *Gospels*, 337.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Köstenberger, *Missions*, 186–89, 190–94.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Ibid., 186, 190.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Pace Köstenberger who writes, “Of great importance is the fact that 20:21 (cf. also 20:24–31) identifies *Jesus* as the sender of the disciples” (italics original). Yet, 17:18 also identifies Jesus as the sender of the disciples. Ibid., 191.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Brown, *John*, 1036; Bultmann, *John*, 382, fn. 2; Chennattu, *Discipleship*, 160; Köstenberger, *Missions*, 191.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Köstenberger, *Missions*, 186.

pushed too far since Jesus' distinction from the world is different than the disciples' separation from the world.¹⁰⁷⁰

The adverb *καθώς* stresses the consecration (*ἀγιάζω*) of both the Son (e.g., 10:36) and the disciples. In 17:17, Jesus prays for the consecration of the disciples to fulfill the mission and then posits himself as a prototype of this consecration in verse 19. Similarly, in 10:36 John portrays Jesus as claiming that he was sanctified (*ἀγιάζω*) and sent (*ἀπέστειλεν*) by the Father into the world. Köstenberger summarizes the extent of the overlap in the mission between Jesus and the disciples by noting that the disciples merely enter into the mission of Jesus rather than replace his role in the mission. He writes:

[The disciples] share only mediately in the purpose of Jesus' mission by being his instruments of further extending it. Jesus' mission itself is never rescinded or abandoned in the Fourth Gospel...The disciples do not replace Jesus—his ministry continues and is effective in their ministry (14:12–14). Jesus is still the 'Sent One' par excellence (cf. 9:7)...The disciples have simply entered into his mission (cf. 4:38), a mission that Jesus has never abandoned.¹⁰⁷¹

Participation in the mission affirms the status of the disciple as a member of the divine family and glorifies the Father—"by this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so become my disciples" (15:8).

The primary focus on the Father in the family extended to the adoption process. Peppard notes the value of adoption to a father-son relationship when he writes, "the more powerful a father is—even all-powerful, as a god—the more relevant adoption becomes to understand that father's relationship to his son."¹⁰⁷² Thus, to be called a child of God (1:12) was to obtain value that surpassed any benefit from human adoption. However, the adoptee was not the primary intended beneficiary of the adoption process, the father was.

The father was the chief member of the family. Van der Watt notes that "the father was usually the dominant figure in an ancient Mediterranean family...[therefore] the fatherhood of God receives the most emphasis in the Gospel."¹⁰⁷³ Peppard writes:

Roman adoption, as with most other Roman family relations, was unusually focused on the *paterfamilias*. At issue were his name, his wealth, his status, and his sacred rites; without a son, his divine spirit (*genius*) would perish. One could conclude that all laws led to the Roman father.¹⁰⁷⁴

The father was the preeminent figure in the ancient family and thus had absolute power of his family. In Rome, *patria potestas*¹⁰⁷⁵ established the father or the eldest heir as the master of the household;

¹⁰⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷¹ Ibid., 196.

¹⁰⁷² Peppard, *Son of God*, 85.

¹⁰⁷³ Van der Watt, *Family*, 422.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Peppard, *Son of God*, 60.

¹⁰⁷⁵ For more on *patria potestas*, see D. S. Potter and D. J. Mattingly, *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1999), 26–31.

“he was the family, and without him there was no family or household.”¹⁰⁷⁶ He had the authority over family social practices (e.g., marriage,¹⁰⁷⁷ divorce,¹⁰⁷⁸ and disowning a child¹⁰⁷⁹) and had the right over the lives of the family members (death,¹⁰⁸⁰ exposing a child,¹⁰⁸¹ and selling a child into slavery¹⁰⁸²). Epictetus explains the father’s authority well when he writes that to be a son is:

To treat everything that is his own as belonging to his father, to be obedient to him in all things, never to speak ill of him to anyone else, nor to say or do anything that will harm him, to give way to him in everything and yield him precedence, helping him as far as is within his power.¹⁰⁸³

In practice, the Roman authority of the father was tempered by care for his family and common sense.¹⁰⁸⁴ Although the extent of the father’s power varied from region to region and Jewish fathers did not possess absolute power like the Roman fathers,¹⁰⁸⁵ the Jewish fathers were still seen as authoritative figures in the household (e.g., Lev 20:9; Deut 21:18–21).¹⁰⁸⁶

Drawing upon this cultural backdrop, John presents God in the Father role as the chief member of the divine family. The Father is the author of life (5:20–21), all-powerful (10:29), one who owns everything (17:6, 9–10),¹⁰⁸⁷ one who commands (10:18), judges (8:16), and seeks worship (4:23; 5:23).¹⁰⁸⁸ Since the Father is preeminent in GJohn, John’s presentation of the divine family

¹⁰⁷⁶ Allen Mason Ward, et al., *A History of the Roman People*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1999), 37. See also Schrenk, “πατήρ,” *TDNT*, 5:949–51.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Seneca, *Controversiae* 7.6.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Suetonius, *Aug.* 63.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Seneca, *Controversiae* 1.6; 9.3; 10.4.16.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Gaius, *Institutes* 1.127.

¹⁰⁸¹ *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 744 *Letter of Ilarion* in Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri Part IV* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1904), 243–44. See also Seneca, *Controversiae* 10.3.

¹⁰⁸² Seneca, *Controversiae* 1.1; 1.2; 1.6.

¹⁰⁸³ Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.10.7 (Oldfather, LCL).

¹⁰⁸⁴ Eva Maria Lassen, “Family as Metaphor: Family Images at the Time of the Old Testament and Early Judaism,” *SJOT* 6 no. 2 (1992): 258–59; Jo-Ann Shelton, *As the Romans Did: A Sourcebook in Roman Social History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 17–18.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Roland De Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), 20, 23.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Lassen, “Family,” 249, 255, 260.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Beth Sheppard interprets this passage through the Roman concept of *peculium* which permitted the adult son to manage a significant share of his father’s property alongside existing *patria potestas* regulations. Sheppard suggests that “God functions as Jesus’ *patria potestas* and that Jesus’ followers were essentially a *peculium* that had been entrusted to Jesus’ direction and oversight by his Father.” Beth M. Sheppard, “Another Look: Johannine ‘Subordinationist Christology’ and the Roman Family,” in *New Currents Through John: A Global Perspective*, ed. Francisco Lozada, Thatcher, Tom (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 113–14.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Carter approaches the Johannine presentation of God as Father from a political angle, drawing a parallel with the Roman emperor who was perceived as “father of the fatherland” (*pater patriae*, also *parens patriae*). He notes six intersecting points between the two figures in this role— (1) savior/benefactor, (2) ruler of the world, (3) judge and lawgiver, (4) creator and shaper of a community, (5) sender of agents, and (6) recipient of honors. Carter, *John and Empire*, 244–50. For a study of the epigraphical evidence of this title, refer to *ibid.*, 235–55. Moreover, Dio Cassius in *Roman History* applies this title to Augustus. See Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 6:53.18.3.

affirms Jesus and the disciples as promoting God. John repeatedly presents Jesus as coming to fulfill God's work (4:34; 5:30, 36; 6:38; 8:29; 12:49–50) until the culminating statement that he has accomplished the Father's assignment and thereby glorified him (17:4–5).¹⁰⁸⁹ The disciples are also expected to glorify the Father by bearing much fruit, which affirms their status as Jesus' disciples (15:8).¹⁰⁹⁰ Thus, ultimately Jesus' and the disciples' sending was to glorify the Father.

¹⁰⁸⁹ The vocative use of *πάτερ* in 17:5 stresses the Father-Son relationship between Jesus and God. The aorist verb *ἐδόξασα* and aorist participle *τελειώσας* denote identical action from different points of view and thus the participle indicates the mode of the glorification. Ernest de Witt Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1900), §139–41; Harris, *John*, 286.

¹⁰⁹⁰ The textual variant of *γένησθε* (preferred by NA27) in **8** and A is *γένησεσθε* (preferred by Barrett, *John*, 475; Brown, *John*, 662; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:102–3, 419–20) does not change the meaning that the disciples' fruit glorifies God and is the outward sign of discipleship. Brown, *John*, 662–63; Harris, *John*, 268.

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